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General Scott's Entrance into Mexico.

OUR FIRST WAR IN MEXICO

BY

FARNHAM BISHOP

AUTHOR OF

"PANAMA PAST AND PRESENT" AND "THE STORY OF THE SUBMARINE"

ILLUSTRATED

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PREFACE

First Motor Battery, N. G. N. Y.
STATE CAMP, PEEKSKILL, N. Y.

July, 1916.

The sentry on Number Three Post passes as I write this. The collar of his O. D. shirt is turned up like an old-fashioned stock; the lean, brown profile under the bell-crowned forage-cap is that of an old-time Yankee. A voice somewhere behind me demands: "When *are* we going to Mexico?" It is '46 come back again.

But across the parade-ground rolls the monstrous gray bulk of Battlecar B-1, a gray steel fortress on armored wheels, and up the slope from the Peekskill road comes a dashing, sputtering detachment of motor-cycle men. It is a far cry from the flintlocks and three-dollar horses—see Grant's "Memoirs"—of seventy years ago.

When we left our armory, some three

weeks ago, none doubted that our second war in Mexico was at hand. Some, comparing the massacre of the troopers of the Tenth Cavalry at Carrizal with the capture of Thornton's dragoons, believed that it had already begun. Now it seems to have been averted, at least temporarily, perhaps forever. It is no use trying to guess what is going to happen next in Mexico.

It was the expectation of a second war, two years ago, that revived my own interest in the war of 1846–48. Most of its histories can be divided into two classes. First come those written immediately after the conclusion of peace. The authors of these painted everything red, white, and blue, and chanted songs of glory. Then come the histories written under what may be called Abolition influence. The authors of these painted everything coal black and passed by on the other side.

Following in the footsteps of Mr. George L. Rives, who, in his splendid work, "The Relations Between the United States and Mexico, 1821–1848," was the first to approach the subject with scientific impar-

tiality, I have tried to give a fair account of the causes and events of our first war in Mexico. God grant there may never be a second!

FARNHAM BISHOP.

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OUR FIRST WAR IN MEXICO

CHAPTER I

TEXAS AND THE KINGDOM OF NEW SPAIN

OUR first war in Mexico began in Texas and because of our annexation of Texas. And to fully understand the causes of that war we must turn back to the very beginning of Texan history, when Alvarez de Piñeda discovered the land of the Tejas Indians and explored its coast in 1519.

Other Spaniards followed Piñeda, and in 1535 Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca and his three companions performed the incredible feat of crossing not only Texas but the entire continent, from where they had been shipwrecked on the coast of Florida to a Spanish settlement on the Pacific. During the rest of the sixteenth century and most of the seventeenth the Spaniards confined themselves to sending various exploring

expeditions through Texas without making any attempt to settle there, for it was not the sort of country they chose to colonize.

What the Spaniards wanted was a country where there was plenty of gold, silver, or precious stones to enrich the royal treasury, and plenty of easily subdued Indians to be converted to Christianity and turned into slaves for their Spanish masters; in short, such a country as Cortez conquered in Mexico and Pizarro in Peru. Where there was no easily portable wealth and the Indians were too few to labor and too fierce to tame, the Spanish conquest stopped. There was no gold in Texas, and the savage Comanches that roamed and hunted on its prairies were no meek and lowly Mexican Indians. So Texas and all North America above Florida and New Mexico were left empty of Spaniards, who nevertheless asserted their King's title to all the New World except Brazil, which had been given to Portugal as the rest of the three Americas had been given to Spain by the Papal Bull of Alexander VI, in 1493.

But as the power of Spain declined, various other nations pushed defiantly into

the vacant spaces of North America; the English in Virginia and New England, the Dutch in New Amsterdam, the Swedes in Delaware, and the French in Canada. Following the natural pathway of the St. Lawrence, the French explorers soon came to the Great Lakes, whence it is an easy portage to the tributaries of the Mississippi. The banner of France was planted at the mouth of that river in 1682 by Robert Cavelier de La Salle, the first white man to descend it to the Gulf of Mexico. Two years later La Salle set sail from France with a small fleet for the mouth of the Mississippi, having persuaded Louis XIV of the ease and value of founding a colony there. But contrary winds and faulty navigation carried the French past their destination to Matagorda Bay, where they built a stockade and called it Fort St. Louis. This was the first European settlement in Texas.

But starvation, disease, and hostile Indians killed three-fourths of the garrison of Fort St. Louis, and when La Salle tried to return overland to Canada he was murdered by his own men in Texas in 1688.

Fort St. Louis was destroyed the following year, and the miserable survivors of the unfortunate French colonists were yielded up by their Indian captors to a Spanish expedition that carried them as prisoners to Mexico City.

This attempt to found a French colony on Spanish soil was greatly resented both in Mexico and Madrid, for the cornerstone of the Spanish colonial system was the absolute exclusion of foreigners. Even Spaniards were not allowed to go to America or Spanish-Americans from one colony to another without elaborate passports, most difficult to obtain. Trade was forbidden between the different colonies or with any European country except Spain. We must remember that the Kingdom of New Spain, as the Spaniards called Mexico, was not a colony of European settlers and traders inhabiting a space cleared of hostile Indians, like Jamestown or Plymouth or New Amsterdam; it was a nation of semicivilized Indians, with only enough Spanish soldiers, priests, and government officials to keep them subjugated to the King of Spain and instruct them in the

Catholic faith. Instead of being exterminated by flintlock and fire-water to make room for a new race, the millions of Mexican Indians simply exchanged the tyranny of the Montezumas for the tyranny of Spain, and that in turn for the tyranny of the military chiefs and the landowning oligarchy of modern Mexico—a tyranny that has come down essentially unbroken till our own time.

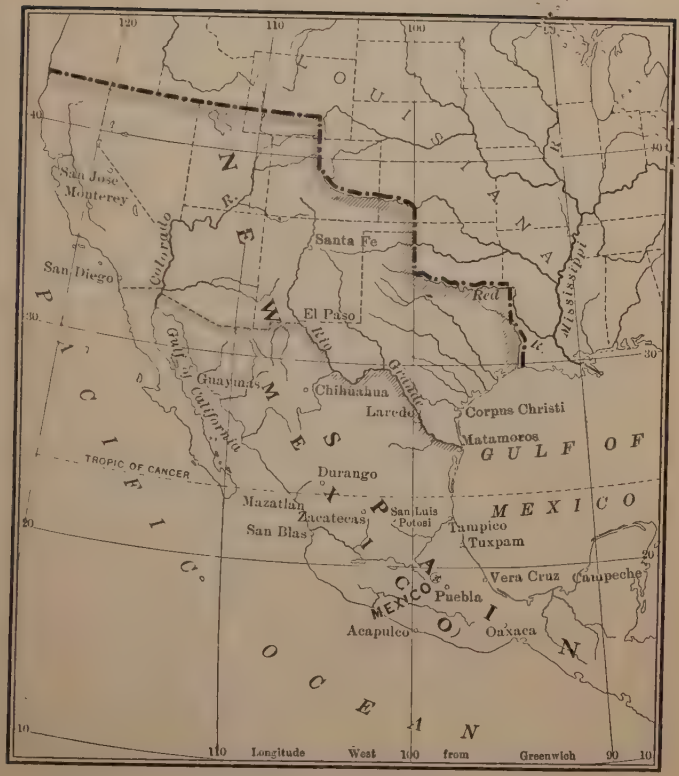
To keep the French out of Texas the Spaniards attempted to found missions there. Each of these missions was a perfect miniature of the whole Spanish colonial system. A few courageous friars, sometimes with, oftener without, a guard of soldiers, would go out among a tribe of pagan Indians to convert them to Christianity. As the converts increased in number, they would build, under the direction of the friars and priests (many of whom were skilled architects and engineers), a chapel and a presidio for the garrison, round which would cluster the adobe huts of the converts, who no longer lived by hunting, but tilled and irrigated their own and their masters' fields. Presently the mission would become a pueblo, or village, and the chapel

a parish church, or in some cases the cathedral of a new city on the broad map of the Kingdom of New Spain.

But the Comanches were not "Indios de paz," peaceful Indians fit to labor in the Lord's vineyard and the friars' field, but "Indios bravos," who swept down on and destroyed the last trace of these earliest Texan missions before the end of the seventeenth century.

In the meanwhile the French had colonized Louisiana and founded New Orleans. Aware that any attempt to open a coastwise trade with Mexico would only result in the capture and confiscation of the first French ship to venture into Vera Cruz, Governor Cadillac of Louisiana sent some French-Canadians across Texas to the nearest Spanish post on the Rio Grande in 1714 to see if it would be possible to start an overland cattle trade between the two colonies. But the Spaniards threw the French emissaries into prison and founded new missions in Texas, some of them close to the French frontier settlement of Natchitoches on the Red River.

No further attempts were made by the



The Kingdom of New Spain.

French to dispute the Spanish possession of Texas beyond a few futile raids during the brief Franco-Spanish War of 1719. A neighborly understanding grew up between the border settlements of the two colonies. The irksome prohibition of foreign trade bore lightly on these distant colonists of Spain. Indeed, as Bancroft declares: "Contraband trade with the French seems to have been the occupation of all classes on the frontier, including the governor and perhaps even the friars."

In 1762 the Seven Years' War and the empire of France in North America came to an end together. England had conquered Canada and now received Florida from Spain, and from France all Louisiana east of the Mississippi except the "Island of New Orleans." That and Louisiana west of the river went to Spain.

In 1800, by the Treaty of San Ildefonso, Spain returned Louisiana to France. Three years later France sold Louisiana to the United States. Immediately the question arose, Was Texas included in the Louisiana Purchase?

Napoleon's government assured our com-

missioners to Paris that such was the case; that the western boundary of French Louisiana had been not the Red River but the Rio Grande del Norte. But this claim was based solely on La Salle's brief occupation of Fort St. Louis, one hundred and nineteen years before, which was more than counterbalanced by the previous exploration and subsequent occupation of Texas by Spain. But because of these French pretensions and because they had heard much of La Salle but little of Alvarez de Piñeda or the missions founded by the Franciscan friars, very many Americans, including Henry Clay and other leaders of public opinion, thought that Texas had been part of French Louisiana and so belonged to us. A generation later this mistaken belief did much to bring about our annexation of Texas and first war with Mexico.

President Monroe, who had been one of the American commissioners sent to Paris to arrange the Louisiana Purchase, had the matter thoroughly investigated when he negotiated the Florida Treaty with Spain in 1819. By this treaty the United States agreed to assume $5,000,000 worth of un-

collectible claims of American citizens against the Spanish crown in exchange for Florida, which Spain had taken from Great Britain during our Revolutionary War. And the United States renounced forever all "rights, claims, and pretensions" to Texas based on the Louisiana Purchase.

The Florida Treaty was ratified by our Senate after a debate of two days; by the Spanish Government after a delay of two years. On February 22, 1821, the treaty was signed in Washington. The southern boundary of the United States was fixed at the Sabine River and thence westward to the Pacific, as shown by the map facing p. 6. The vexatious Texas question was declared to be finally settled and a lasting boundary established between the United States and the Kingdom of New Spain.

Forty-eight hours later General Iturbide proclaimed the independence of Mexico and the end of the Kingdom of New Spain.

CHAPTER II

THE MEXICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

EVERY year on the 16th of September the President of Mexico appears on the balcony in front of the National Palace and, while the great crowd that throngs the Cathedral Plaza keep perfect silence that all may hear, the chief magistrate of the republic tolls an ancient church-bell—the liberty bell of Mexico. By that bell, when it hung in the belfry of the parish church of the little village of Dolores not far from the city of Guanajuato, the priest Hidalgo called his people together on Sunday, September 16, 1810, and urged them to revolt with the famous "Grito de Dolores," or "Cry of Dolores": "Down with the wicked government! Down with tyranny!"

Mexico and the other Spanish colonies had already refused two years before to recognize Joseph Bonaparte, who had been forcibly placed on the throne of Spain by

his brother Napoleon. Ferdinand VII, the rightful but worthless King of Spain, was in a French prison, and to him the heads of the army and church in Mexico swore allegiance, choosing in the meanwhile a viceroy from among their own number. But this separation from the mother country, formal and temporary as it was meant to be, stirred the deep-rooted hatred of Spain and Spaniards in the hearts of the Indians, mixed-bloods, and even the Creoles —persons of pure Spanish descent who, because they were colonial-born, were forbidden to hold office and were in every way discriminated against in favor of the peninsular-born Spaniard.

The Cry of Dolores met with a widespread and prompt response. A rapidly increasing army assembled under the leadership of Hidalgo and the banner of Our Lady of Guadalupe.* The cities of Guanajuato, Guadalajara, San Blas, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosi, and many smaller places were captured by the insurgents, whose number swelled at one time to as many as

* A shrine, much reverenced throughout Mexico, near Mexico City.

eighty thousand men, mostly ignorant and untrained Indian laborers. Hidalgo and his peasant army were ultimately defeated and dispersed by one-tenth their number of well-drilled and well-handled Spanish troops at the Bridge of Calderon, June 17, 1811. Hidalgo and his principal officers were soon captured and promptly shot.

For ten terrible years thereafter the War of Independence dragged on, no longer fought in the open field but by bands of guerillas, who too often degenerated into brigands. The Spanish troops held only the large cities and as much ground as their regiments covered on the march. The country was burned and pillaged by both sides, farms and villages depopulated, live stock slaughtered or driven off, the mines shut down while the flooded shafts caved in and the miners starved or went a-soldiering. Conditions in Mexico then were almost exactly like those in Cuba immediately before the Spanish-American War or in Mexico itself a hundred years later, after the downfall of Porfirio Diaz.

The restoration of Ferdinand VII after the overthrow of Napoleon led to a deter-

mined effort on the part of the Spanish Government to put down the revolts not only in Mexico but throughout Central and South America. But the expeditionary army that was assembled at Cadiz to be sent to the colonies suddenly mutinied under the leadership of Riego, and though their first leader was defeated and shot, the mutineers were soon joined by the greater part of the country. Much against his will, the reactionary Ferdinand VII was forced to restore and swear to uphold the liberal Constitution of 1812, which had been established by the provisional government during his captivity and promptly abolished after his restoration.

The Spanish Cortes, or Parliament, was convened, and, according to the re-established Constitution, Mexico would have been entitled to thirty-seven representatives. But none were ever chosen.

Almost the first action of the Spanish Cortes of 1820 was to reduce the oppressively heavy taxes paid by the people and make up the deficit by confiscating part of the enormous wealth of the church. The news of this and the danger to their own

church property so alarmed the Mexican prelates that they promptly plotted with General Iturbide for the separation of New from Old Spain. The result of this clerico-military conspiracy was the proclamation of the independence of Mexico in the "Plan of Iguala," February 24, 1821.

The church and the army between them had been the real rulers of Mexico from the beginning, and without them the royal authority had not a leg left to stand on. Though the King's flag still flew from the Castle of San Juan de Ulloa at Vera Cruz, the latest and last of the viceroys of Mexico, the Celto-Iberian O'Donoju, was unable to set foot in the city itself when he arrived from Spain. Going inland under a safe-conduct, O'Donoju met Iturbide and the two signed the so-called Treaty of Cordova, August 21, 1821. By this treaty, which the Spanish Government refused to ratify, the Kingdom of New Spain was recognized as an independent constitutional monarchy to be called "The Mexican Empire." The new imperial crown was to be offered to each male member of the Spanish royal family in succession, and if they all

refused it the Mexican Cortes was to choose the Emperor.

This programme was duly followed out, and, with the aid of a prearranged military uprising near the Cortes at the psychological moment, Iturbide was elected and crowned as Augustin I, Emperor of Mexico. His reign was shorter in point of time but no less tragic in termination than either that of his predecessor, Montezuma, or his successor, Maximilian. The army had no use for Iturbide, and after ten months of his harsh but feeble reign his own soldiers forced his abdication on March 19, 1822. He was allowed to go to Europe, with the understanding that he was never to return. But less than two years afterward the outbreak of fresh revolutions tempted Iturbide back to Mexico. Landing at Tampico with a few followers, the ex-Emperor was promptly arrested, court-martialled, and shot. His great-grandson, General Eduardo Iturbide, was for a few weeks in 1914 the governor of the federal district about Mexico City, before he was forced to become an exile in the United States.

A constituent congress was assembled to

devise a republican form of government for Mexico, and the result of its somewhat hasty labors was the Constitution of 1824, an instrument "curiously compounded of the Constitution of the United States —omitting the first ten amendments— and the Spanish (Cadiz) Constitution of 1812."*

The executive and legislative branches of the new government were closely patterned after those of the "Anglo-Americans of the North." There was to be a President, elected every four years and with a suspensive power of veto; a Senate, with two members from each state, and a House of Deputies, with one member for every eighty thousand inhabitants. But the third branch of the government, the judiciary, was much weaker than with us; for, instead of leaving to the Supreme Court the interpretation of the Constitution (the cornerstone on which Chief Justice Marshall and his successors were to build up the mighty power of our Federal courts), the Mexicans decided that their Congress alone had the right to "resolve doubts which may occur

* Rives, I, 42.

about the meaning of the articles of this Constitution."

The most striking difference between ours and the Mexican Constitution of 1824 was the establishment by the latter of a state religion and the spirit of religious intolerance. The very first article, translated, reads as follows:

"The religion of the Mexican nation is and shall be the Catholic, apostolic, Roman (faith). The nation is to protect it by wise and just laws, and prohibit the exercise of any other."

This clause, moreover, so it was declared, was never to be amended.

Nothing was said about negro slavery, but the slave-trade had been abolished by statute a few months before. Negroes were very rare in Mexico, enslaved or free, because of the abundance of cheap Indian labor. Though Indian slavery had been abolished in early colonial times, a great part of the poor people of Mexico were peons—workmen who had become indebted to their masters for money advanced on exorbitant interest and who spent the rest of their lives working for their creditors,

who found it both easy and profitable to keep the ignorant, pleasure-loving peons in perpetual debt. This peonage was practically slavery, but nothing was said about it in the Constitution of 1824.

The most obvious weakness of the new republic was its artificial federalism. Like every other Spanish-American country at the time, Mexico enthusiastically copied many features of the government of the United States of America. But, unlike the thirteen British colonies, the Kingdom of New Spain had always been a single administrative unit, with a strong centralized government in a great capital city that dominated the rest of Mexico as Paris dominates France. The logical development after the War of Independence would have been a centralized republic, which many Mexicans desired. But the majority of the constituent congress, admiring the form of the American Union but ignoring the fact of Mexican unity, carved their country up into states, none of which had had any previous separate existence. Texas and Coahuila together made one huge, sparsely populated state.

Hundreds of Americans, eager for adventure, had fought in Texas during the War of Independence on the side of the insurgents against Spain. These American filibusters played an important part in the capture of the two principal Texas towns, La Bahia (Goliad) and San Antonio de Bexar. They protested vehemently against the proposed execution in cold blood of two captured Spanish governors and twelve of their officers, and many of the Americans left in disgust when their Mexican allies, after promising to have these prisoners sent safely home to Spain, had the Spaniards' throats cut by their own escort. Yet no less than eight hundred and fifty Americans fought on the Mexican side in the disastrous defeat near San Antonio that led to the recapture of all the towns, followed by savage reprisals on the part of the Spanish troops.

Guerilla warfare was waged in Texas not only by land but by sea. Jean Lafitte, the famous "Pirate of the Gulf," whose men had served Andrew Jackson's field-guns at the battle of New Orleans, seized the island of Galveston as a headquarters for his fleet

of privateers, sailing under the Mexican and various South American flags. Because it captured too many ships of neutral nations and was indeed little better than a nest of pirates, Lafitte's colony was broken up in 1821 by the United States brig *Enterprise*.

Another picturesque and premature attempt to found an American colony in Texas was made by James Long, who had been a surgeon in the United States Army. With three hundred of his countrymen Long actually set up and proclaimed an independent "Republic of Texas," with a complete civil government and even a newspaper. But within four months after its foundation, in 1821, Long's republic was broken up and dispersed by a detachment of Spanish troops. When the last Spanish soldier withdrew from Texas the country was almost as devoid of white inhabitants as it had been at the beginning of the sixteenth or end of the seventeenth century.

"By the time that Mexican independence was fairly achieved," says Mr. Rives, "Texas was almost depopulated. The

Spanish troops and the horse Indians between them had very nearly succeeded in destroying every semblance of cultivated and civilized life. A few destitute people still lingered about Bexar (San Antonio) and La Bahia (Goliad) and some few in and near what had once been Nacogdoches. Otherwise the country was deserted. Its wide and fertile expanse lay in the sight of all men, a huge and tempting prize for whosoever, Mexican or foreigner, was skilful enough or bold enough to take it."

CHAPTER III

MIGRATION OF AMERICANS TO TEXAS

MOSES AUSTIN was a Connecticut Yankee with a roving foot that carried him across even the sacred border of the Kingdom of New Spain. But in Louisiana, where Austin first settled in 1798, the exclusion of foreigners had never been as absolute as in the other Spanish colonies, for Louisiana had originally been French and many Frenchmen remained there after 1762. Besides, the whole east bank of the Mississippi above New Orleans was British territory. English ships had the right to navigate the river even to its source, and soon after the Revolution Yankee flatboatmen floated down-stream and Yankee trappers and traders drifted overland in constantly increasing numbers. Though these intruders were not always welcome, the Spanish authorities in Louisiana could not keep them out, and toward the end actually granted tracts of land to

settlers from the United States, such as Moses Austin. And when, after twenty years' residence in what is now the State of Missouri, Austin found himself back in the Union and in need of money, he naturally migrated again, this time to Texas.

Riding across the empty prairies to San Antonio de Bexar, Austin asked Governor Martinez for a tract of land on which to settle three hundred families from Louisiana. Martinez, who at first angrily ordered Austin out of the country, joined with the *ayuntamiento*, or town council, in a petition to the authorities at Mexico City to grant Austin's request. With this grant in his pocket and his life-work done, Austin returned to Missouri and died there June 10, 1821, in the fifty-seventh year of his age. The city of Austin, the capital of Texas, commemorates his name and that of his son, Stephen Fuller Austin, who carried on his work.

"The glorious news of the independence of Mexico" greeted young Austin as he rode into Bexar, and sent him post-haste to Mexico City. Scarcely had the Emperor Iturbide affirmed the viceroy's grant to the

Austins by the Imperial Colonization Act of 1823 than the Mexican Empire ended its short life, and the work had to be done over again with the republican authorities. But by the National Colonization Act of 1824 Austin finally obtained the fullest powers.

As an *empresario*, or contractor, with the government who undertook to settle two hundred or more families in Texas, Austin was to receive a certain amount of public land for himself. Every settler was to be given either a 177-acre farm or a cattle range of over 4,000 acres. All colonists were to be exempt for six years, not only from ordinary taxation but from the Mexican tariff, which prohibited the importation of many necessities and placed a very high duty on most of the rest—an unintelligent relic of the Spanish colonial system. Except for this exemption, it would have been impossible for the Texan colonists to have procured ploughs, clothing, or provisions without wholesale smuggling, for almost nothing was then manufactured in Mexico and the lack of roads made foodstuffs scarce and dear.

Another important exemption was the

suspension, as far as concerned Texas, of the law abolishing negro slavery. Austin insisted on this because, though he himself was opposed to slavery on principle, he foresaw that most of his colonists would be Southerners; also, he believed that the future wealth of Texas lay in the cultivation of cotton, then thought impossible without forced negro labor. Immigrants were therefore permitted to bring their own slaves with them, but these negroes were not to be resold and their children were to be born free.

The only things required of white immigrants into Texas were: first, that they should be Roman Catholics; second, that they should show a certificate of good character from their home authorities; and, finally, that they take the oath of allegiance to Mexico. No provision was made for stopping undesirable immigrants at the frontier or for the trial and deportation of any unlawful residents. The Federal Government of Mexico simply left it all to Austin and washed its hands of Texas for the next six years.

The Mexicans seem to have thought that

because the Austins had come from Louisiana the settlers they proposed to bring into Texas would be from there also, of Latin blood and the Catholic faith. But those who came were typical American frontiersmen of the period, who knew little of any church and least of all the Roman Catholic. Otherwise, they were ideal colonists from Austin's point of view, and he naturally let down the bars.

"I wish the settlers to remember," he declared in a public address, "that the Roman Catholic is the religion of this nation. . . . We must all be particular and respect the Catholic religion." But nothing was said about its being obligatory.

The religious qualification being ignored so calmly, the other two were very easily met. The certificate of good character the settler was supposed to bring with him from his home authorities was usually obtained after his arrival in Texas from the nearest alcalde or petty magistrate, "on the testimony of two bystanders and the payment of a dollar and a half."* As for the oath of allegiance, it was easy to take but difficult

* Kennedy's "Texas," I, 339.

for a feeble government in far-away Mexico City to enforce.

Settlers poured in rapidly. Eight new *empresarios* were given contracts by the State of Coahuila, to whom the public lands had been turned over by the federal authorities, and these contractors are said to have brought in some three thousand families. Two of these colonies were Irish and there were many Germans, but these elements soon amalgamated with the native-born Americans, exactly as in the United States. Thousands of other immigrants came over the border of their own accord, and squatted on the first vacant site that struck their fancy. Their "right there was none to dispute."

Entirely neglected by the Mexican Government, the American settlers in Texas shifted for themselves and flourished exceedingly. They laid out the rough trails over which men brought their families and chattels, at first on horse and mule back, later in wagons, overland from Natchitoches in Louisiana, or up from Galveston Bay and the other ports where the sailing-vessels came from New Orleans or New

York. These Anglo-Saxon colonists needed no friar architects to design their log cabins for them or troops to defend them against the Comanches. They paid no taxes and received nothing in return. The earlier mission schools having greatly decayed, the Texans established rude ones of their own wherever a few children could be gathered together and an itinerant teacher found to instruct them. Towns and villages arose, with American officials bearing Spanish titles, American general stores well stocked with goods from the United States, American lawyers, doctors, and, of course, American newspapers.

While the Mexican population of Texas remained nearly stationary, the number of Americans doubled every few years. In 1825 there were about 7,000 people in Texas, almost equally divided between the two races; two years later the population had risen to 10,000 and the Americans outnumbered the Mexicans by 5 to 3. By 1830 there were something like 20,000 Americans in Texas, including 1,000 negro slaves. That these were not more numerous was because Texas had become a country of

small farms and ranches instead of large cotton plantations as Austin had expected. A Coahuila state statute forbidding slavery had been avoided by bringing negroes in as peons, and when President Guerrero's government passed a national emancipation act in 1829 the resentment of the Texans was so great that Texas, which had the only slaves in Mexico, was specially exempted.

This defiance of the national authority and the menace to Mexico of the strong foreign colony that had grown up within its borders were keenly felt by the new secretary of foreign affairs who now took office under President Bustamante, Don Lucas Ignacio Alaman. A well-educated man and author of a valuable history of his own country, Alaman had a strangely distorted idea of the government and history of the United States. Disregarding the limited powers of our Federal Government and the varying policies of different parties and administrations, Alaman believed that from the foundation of our Republic the American people had systematically conspired to make themselves masters of the entire

Western hemisphere. With this end in view, he declared the authorities at Washington had secretly promoted the colonization of Texas with Americans who, when they were strong enough, would declare their independence as a preliminary to being taken into the Union.

But we know that Moses Austin left Louisiana for Texas not to extend the boundaries of the United States but to get outside them. He received no more aid from the Federal Government than would Ichabod Crane have received from the selectmen of Sleepy Hollow had he realized his vision of "the blooming Katrina, with a whole family of children, mounted on the top of a wagon loaded with household trumpery, with pots and kettles dangling beneath and . . . himself bestriding a pacing mare with a colt at her heels, setting out for Kentucky, Tennessee, or the Lord knows where." The lure of "immense tracts of wild land and shingle palaces in the wilderness" set the laziest Anglo-Saxon a-roving without help or hinderance from the authorities he left behind him. But such initiative on the part of the individual

and indifference on the part of his government were totally incomprehensible to the Spanish-American of the early nineteenth century, bred in the paternal colonial system of Spain. The measures that Alaman now took for curbing the Americans in Texas were typical of that system.

Troops were to be sent into Texas to overawe the colonists and enforce respect for the authority of Mexico. No more slaves were to enter the country, nor any more foreigners without proper passports. The Colonization Act of 1824 was repealed, the Federal Government took charge of the public lands again and made every effort to create settlements of native Mexicans thereon. But free Mexican citizens refused to go to Texas on any terms, and the wretched convicts who were sent there in chains and at great expense soon ran away or were killed by the Indians. In spite of everything, Texas became more American and less Mexican every day.

The privilege of free trade that the colonists had enjoyed since 1823 was now declared at an end, and the Mexican tariff, which absolutely prohibited the importa-

tion of many necessary articles and placed a very high duty on almost everything else, was now, with certain exceptions, to be applied to Texas. This impossible combination of a protective tariff with an almost utter lack of home industries was a direct legacy from colonial Spain, and a scholar and statesman like Señor Alaman might well have paused before reviving it. He should have remembered how the dearth of Spanish goods had forced the Spanish colonists from Texas to Peru either to do without or to trade with foreign smugglers (see page 4). He should have remembered the tragic results of the spasmodic attempts of the Spanish authorities to stop this smuggling by savage attacks on the free-traders —the blazing cities and sunken galleons that paid for the treacherous destruction of Francis Drake's and John Hawkins's trading fleet in the harbor of Vera Cruz; the sack of Panama by the buccaneers after they had been forbidden by the Spaniards to hunt the wild cattle of the West Indian islands and so turned to Spaniard-hunting; and the War of Jenkins's Ear. He should have realized that the American-born Tex-

ans and the coastwise skippers who supplied their wants were of the same fighting stock as Drake and the buccaneers, and that when the Texans needed new ploughs, which they could not buy in Mexico and were forbidden to import from the United States, it would take more than a few hundred half-breed Mexican conscripts scattered along the coast to suspend the law of supply and demand.

The climax came when Colonel Bradburn, the Kentucky-born commander of the Mexican post at Anahuac on Galveston Bay lost his temper after two years of constant bickerings, and in May, 1832, arrested and imprisoned without warrant seven prominent Texans to overawe the smugglers and their sympathizers. Instead, the neighborhood rose, besieged the fort, and sent to Brazoria for two cannon with which the trading schooner *Sabine* had been bidding equal defiance to custom-house officers and soldiers. The only way to bring the guns from Brazoria to Anahuac was by sea, and this the commander of the little Mexican post at Velasco, at the mouth of the Sabine, very properly refused to per-

tivit. So the Texans turned the two guns on Velasco and bombarded and captured the fort, with a loss of several lives on both sides. This affair was regarded as a preliminary to an assault on Anahuac and civil war seemed unavoidable.

Then suddenly the Anahuac prisoners were released without a fight, Colonel Bradburn went home to Kentucky, and the Mexican garrisons were withdrawn from every post in Texas except Bexar. A new revolution had broken out in Mexico; Bustamante was no longer President nor Señor Alaman Secretary of Foreign Affairs. There was a new President in Mexico City, the victorious and popular young General Santa Anna.

CHAPTER IV

"REMEMBER THE ALAMO!"

ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA was born in the city of Jalapa on February 21, 1795, of sufficiently gentle blood to be given a cadetship in the royal army at the age of fifteen. The outbreak of the War of Independence found him fighting in the royalist ranks, where he remained to the end, by which time he was a lieutenant-colonel.. He was a "Tory" of the deepest dye, and it was no love of national liberty but a shrewd desire to keep on the side of the army and the church that made him hasten to join Iturbide after the proclamation of the Plan of Iguala.

Santa Anna's first chance to distinguish himself came in 1829 when Ferdinand VII of Spain, still stubbornly refusing to recognize the independence of Mexico, made a ridiculous attempt to reconquer that country of 7,000,000 inhabitants with an army of 3,000 men. Deserted by its fleet and rav-

aged by yellow fever, the Spanish expeditionary force was easily cooped up in Tampico and forced to surrender by a much larger Mexican army under General Santa Anna. Hailed as the hero and savior of his country, Santa Anna soon made himself President by heading what was in name a revolution but in fact nothing but a sordid mutiny of military office-seekers. After he was in power the difficulty of finding enough jobs for his followers and other internal affairs of Mexico gave Santa Anna no time to attend to Texas for the next three years.

In the meanwhile a general convention of Texans met at San Felipe, in the fall of 1832, to consider the best course of action to follow after the bloodshed at Velasco and the departure of the Mexican troops. Some voted for war and a declaration of independence, but the majority of the delegates decided that Texas should stand on her rights under the Mexican Constitution of 1824, the upholding and enforcement of which had been the ostensible cause of Santa Anna's revolution. It would be enough, they decided, if Texas were separated from Coahuila and erected into a

state. Petitions to the Federa captured ment for the granting of statehoo irth-of- repeal of Alaman's laws of 1830 w igh- cordingly drafted. A second conve co. called for by the first, met in March, 1 is adopted a tentative constitution and s Stephen Fuller Austin to press the claim of Texas at Mexico City.

But the utmost that Austin could accomplish there was the removal of the ban on immigration from the United States, which only kept out peaceful settlers and attracted the adventurous. And when Austin attempted to return home he was arrested on the road, taken back to Mexico City, and locked up in the old prison of the Inquisition on no definite charge but a general suspicion of treasonable conspiracy. The proceedings in Texas, though perfectly regular and understandable from an American point of view and in accord with the spirit of popular government that theoretically prevailed in Mexico, were totally incomprehensible to the mediæval-minded soldier-politicians of the capital. They were particularly alarmed and mystified by the name and purpose of a "convention," regarding it

aged by and dangerous kind of conspiracy tionary authority. The political knowlpico of Santa Anna and his gallant collargues seems to have been on a par with Ant of their contemporaries, the mutinous coyal Guard of Spain, who, when asked by Queen Isabella to define the constitution they were shouting for, scratched their heads and replied:

"Carramba! We don't know. They say it is a good thing and will raise our pay and make salt cheaper."*

An offer on the part of President Andrew Jackson for the purchase of Texas by the United States for $5,000,000 made at this time, with no ulterior purpose, was so grossly mismanaged by the incompetent and unscrupulous American minister to Mexico as to confirm the Mexicans' belief in Alaman's theory of an "American conspiracy" (see page 29) and strengthen their resolve to take strong measures with the Texans.

Anahuac was regarrisoned and its customhouse re-established in 1835. William B. Travis, a daredevil Texan, with a party of kindred spirits swooped down on the place

* John Hay, "Castilian Days," p. 171.

and took it without a fight, the captured garrison amicably joining in a Fourth-of-July frolic with their captors and neighbors before being shipped back to Mexico. When Santa Anna demanded that Travis and four other ringleaders in the affair be yielded up, together with a native Mexican called Zavala, who was a personal enemy of Santa Anna's and a warm friend of Austin's, the colonists refused to surrender these men to certain death. Austin himself was now released from prison and came home on an American schooner, that not only beat off the attack of a Mexican revenue cutter just before reaching port but put out with reinforcements and captured the cutter next day. Then on top of these petty scufflings fell a mighty political thunderbolt.

By a simple act of a subservient congress Santa Anna set aside the constitution he had sworn to uphold, abolished the federal system and the governments of the different states, and made Mexico a centralized republic. Texas was separated from Coahuila and made a mere administrative department, subservient to an all-powerful con-

gress and President in Mexico City. This destruction of states' rights might mean little to most native Mexicans to whom statehood was an artificial creation of the last decade, but it was different with the Texans, most of whom came from the Southern States of the American Union—commonwealths strong in their belief in states' rights and local patriotism. A third general convention was assembled, and to spare the Mexicans' feelings it was called a "consultation." But before this consultation met, on October 15, hostilities had begun in earnest.

A detachment of Mexican troops sent by the commander of the garrison at Bexar to seize a brass six-pounder belonging to the Texans at the village of Gonzales was met and defeated by the "embattled farmers" and ranchmen there assembled for its defense. Another body of colonists captured the well-stored but unguarded Mexican arsenal in the old mission at Goliad, even as Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain boys had surprised Ticonderoga. War was now inevitable. Even the peace-loving Austin took the field at the head of an im-

provised volunteer army that marched against Bexar, where General Cos, who had been sent by Santa Anna to subdue the Texans, had arrived just in time to learn of the affair at Gonzales. Austin's force encamped a little distance outside Bexar; Cos sallied forth, attacked the camp, and was driven back into the town with heavy loss. But when Austin ordered an assault upon Bexar, his men politely but firmly refused. Except that they were well armed —the Texans' rifles were vastly superior to the muskets of the Mexican conscripts— Austin would have been justified in saying of his army before Bexar what Washington had said of the American army at Cambridge sixty years before: "A hardy militia, brave and patriotic, but illy armed, undisciplined, unorganized, and wanting in almost everything necessary for successful war."

Much to his relief, Austin was sent to the United States with two others as agents of the provisional government established by the "consultation." After hesitating for five weeks to attack regular troops in such a strong position, volunteers sprang

forward in the Texan camp on the night of December 3, when a grizzled veteran of the Mexican War of Independence cried: "Who will go with old Ben Milam into San Antonio?"

San Antonio de Bexar was a typical Spanish-American town, with streets running at right angles from its two plazas, which were surrounded with thick-walled stone buildings, whose flat roofs, with their breast-high parapets, were well adapted for defense. Barricades, on many of which were mounted cannon, closed the ends of the streets and the entrances to the plazas, musketeers thronged the roofs and the loopholed walls, and it would have been no easy task for undrilled men without bayonets to charge down the streets and make a frontal attack on the barricades. Very wisely the Texans did nothing of the kind, but tunnelled through the buildings, battering their way through the flimsy partition walls with heavy logs, driving the defenders before them from room to room, house to house, street to street, for five days and nights, beginning at the adobe huts on the outskirts and ending on the

roofs of the buildings on the two plazas. From these vantage-points Milam's men, who had lost their leader but won the town, could fire down on the rear of the now useless barricades. General Cos and what was left of his army fled across the river and sought refuge in the ruined mission of San Antonio, which, from the Spanish name of the cottonwood grove in which it stood, was called the Alamo. There General Cos surrendered and he and his soldiers were allowed to return to Mexico on parole, having given their word of honor not to fight again against Texas.

Even after the Mexican troops had been driven across the Rio Grande the Texans still hesitated to declare their independence, hoping that the native "federal party of the interior" might now overthrow Santa Anna and restore the Constitution of 1824. But as the winter passed it became increasingly clear that Santa Anna had put down all his foes in Mexico, and was assembling the largest possible army for the invasion and reconquest of Texas. To resist him there were only the weak garrisons at Goliad and Bexar, and at Gonzales a little

army with a constantly changing personnel under General Houston.

Big Sam Houston, who as a Tennessee militiaman had charged with Andrew Jackson over the Creek Indians' log ramparts at Horseshoe Bend, where he had been severely wounded and earned a commission in the regular army for his gallantry, was a strange and picturesque figure. He had been governor of Tennessee, he had lived for years as a drunken outcast among the Cherokee Indians; he was six feet four inches in height, and "rejoiced in a catamount-skin waistcoat." But for all his eccentricities the new commander-in-chief of the Texan forces was a born fighter and a trained soldier. General Houston fully realized the necessity of concentrating his scattered detachments before Santa Anna could strike and destroy them separately, and message after message was sent ordering Travis and Bowie at the Alamo and Fannin at Goliad to fall back on the main body. But discipline was scarcer than courage in the Texan ranks, and with a folly as splendid as that of Sir Richard Grenville at the battle of the "Revenge,"

Travis stuck to his post, declaring that he was "determined to sustain himself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor or that of his country."

Santa Anna invaded Texas with 6,000 men, including General Cos and his followers, who made no bones about breaking their parole. The advance-guard crossed the Rio Grande on February 12, 1836, and a fortnight later they were in Bexar.

Travis and Bowie made no attempt to hold the town, for their force, less than 200 all told, was not strong enough even to line the walls of the mission courtyard, one end of which was formed by the sturdy, roofless ruin of the little chapel of St. Anthony, that we call the Alamo. The little band of Texans having refused to surrender, on Sunday, March 6, 2,000 Mexican infantry, under the eyes of the President of the Republic, stormed the Alamo. The outer enclosure was quickly carried through the breaches in its walls, but the chapel had to be conquered inch by inch, by bayonet against rifle butt and hunting-knife, till the last of the garrison lay dead in the last

blood-stained corner. Travis fell among the first in the open courtyard; Bowie, sick with pneumonia, was butchered with the other patients in the hospital. No man surrendered, no man escaped. It is from the Mexicans themselves we have this story of nineteenth-century Americans who, bound by no Spartan law but the pride of race, died like Leonidas and his three hundred. "Thermopylæ had its messengers of defeat; the Alamo had none."

Colonel Fannin, commanding the Texan garrison at Goliad, disregarding Houston's repeated orders and the terrible warning of the fall of the Alamo, delayed his retreat until the 19th of March. Impeded with ox-carts, clumsy artillery, and a long train of non-combatants, Fannin's men were overtaken in a few hours by the Mexican cavalry and forced to intrench themselves on the open prairie five miles from the nearest water-supply. Resistance was hopeless, and Fannin surrendered next day, after the Mexican officers had promised that the Americans' lives should be spared, and that the greater number of Fannin's men, who had recently come from the United States,

should be allowed to return there. Taken back to Goliad, the captured Americans were imprisoned there for a week, at the end of which time all the able-bodied men among them were led out, with their knapsacks on their backs, under a strong escort of Mexican infantry and marched away, as they supposed, toward the seacoast and home. But when they had gone a few miles out on the open prairie the escort stepped back, raised their muskets, and deliberately shot down every prisoner, except a few who escaped by running away or by hiding among the dead. Returning to Goliad, the same soldiers dragged out and massacred the American sick and wounded, including Colonel Fannin, who is said to have been the last man executed. This cold-blooded butchery took place on Palm Sunday, three weeks after the fall of the Alamo, and by the direct orders of President Santa Anna.

"In this war," he had written one of his officers, "there are no prisoners."

In justice to Santa Anna we must remember that the custom of shooting prisoners of war had long been followed by the Spaniards in America, that it was almost

universal on both sides during the Mexican War of Independence, when 14 Spanish officers had been killed in Texas by their own escort, under precisely similar circumstances to the slaughter of Fannin's men (see page 19), and that it still prevails in Mexico to-day. With certain rare exceptions, honorably distinctive but shamefully few, every victorious general of Mexico from Cortez to Pancho Villa has stained his hands as red as Santa Anna's with his prisoners' blood.

Houston's army had already evacuated Gonzales on March 14, and was in full retreat to the northeast. Panic-stricken by the savagery of the invaders, the greater part of the people of Texas left their homes, burning all that they could not carry or drive away with them, and fled before Santa Anna's advancing columns to the Louisiana frontier and the protection of the United States. The new-born government of the Republic of Texas, that had declared its independence on the 1st of March, abandoned its capital at Harrisburg, which was occupied on April 16 by Santa Anna with only 750 men. Incau-

tious haste, lack of provisions, bad roads, and faulty equipment had scattered the rest of his 6,000 far and wide over the broad surface of Texas. Realizing this, Houston stopped his retreat and led his impatient little army back to strike a decisive blow. After a good deal of marching and countermarching the two forces came face to face by the banks of the San Jacinto River, not far from where it flows into Galveston Bay.

Instead of pressing his attack, Houston let the first day pass with only slight skirmishing, for which he has been blamed by most military critics, as the delay permitted Santa Anna to be joined that night by General Cos, whose reinforcements brought the Mexican army up to about 1,200 men, 1 field-piece, and 3 generals. The Texans numbered about 800, 90 of whom were mounted, and they had a battery of 2 iron four-pounders, presented by sympathetic citizens of Cincinnati.

In the heart of the enemies' country, with a deep swamp in his rear and a hostile army in his front, which was protected only by a flimsy barricade of baggage and pack-

saddles, Santa Anna calmly retired to his tent for his usual midday nap. His soldiers either followed their chief's example, played cards, or cooked their dinners, their guns unloaded, their bayonets unfixed. At high noon on the 21st of April the Texans filed quietly out of their camp and formed in line behind an "island of timber." Two shots from the four-pounders sent the pack-saddles flying, a single volley crashed from the Texan rifles, and while it still rang in Santa Anna's startled ears, Houston and his 800 came roaring over the barricade, beating down the defenders with clubbed rifles and shouting vengefully: "Remember Travis! Remember Bowie! Remember Goliad! Remember the Alamo!"

There was no fighting and no defense worth speaking of at the so-called battle of San Jacinto, though that in no way detracts from the credit of Houston and his Texans. Utterly surprised and deserted by their own officers, the meek-spirited Mexican Indian conscripts were killed or stampeded almost as easily as a flock of sheep. How many hundred of them were killed and wounded it is impossible to say, but less

than 50 out of the whole 1,200 escaped captivity or death. Vince's Bridge, the only means of crossing the swamp in Santa Anna's rear, had been destroyed just before the assault by "Deaf Smith," a scout famous ever after in Texan song and story. Only 2 of Houston's men were killed and 23 wounded, including the general himself, who had been shot in the foot.

President Santa Anna and General Cos were both captured. Few could have blamed the Texans if both these worthies had been shot or hanged to the nearest tree, but the humanity of the Texans and the firmness of Houston spared their lives. Santa Anna hastened to sign a treaty recognizing the independence of Texas. Though the Mexican Government repudiated this treaty and behaved exactly like the Government of Spain after the Treaty of Cordova had been signed by O'Donoju and Iturbide, the independence of Texas was nevertheless an accomplished fact. At the news of Santa Anna's defeat, the other Mexican commanders in Texas retreated across the Rio Grande. Despite Mexico's angry protests that Texas was merely a re-

bellious province to be presently subdued, the other nations of the earth, following the leadership of the United States, soon recognized the independence of the Republic of Texas.

CHAPTER V

MEDIATION AND ANNEXATION

MEDIATION between Mexico and the Republic of Texas, through the good offices of the British and French ministers at Mexico City, was proposed by President Houston in the summer of 1843. During the seven years since San Jacinto, an irritating and inconclusive border warfare had been carried on by both sides. Towns had been raided and cattle driven off on either side of the border; Mexicans had captured the district judge, members of the bar and other prominent citizens of San Antonio, and for the last three years the Texan navy of four small schooners had been subsidized by the revolutionary party in Yucatan and cruised successfully off the Gulf coast of Mexico.

More ambitious but less successful was the attempt made to conquer New Mexico —as all the huge and indefinite region between Texas and California was then

called—with a force of less than 300 Texans in 1841. Worn out and scattered after their desert march, these men surrendered to the New Mexican authorities without firing a shot, were imprisoned in Santa Fé and then taken to Mexico City, where they were eventually released, after having suffered great hardships and countless indignities. In the United States public sympathy for the "prisoners of Santa Fé" was both warm and outspoken, and it was quite impossible for the Federal Government, with its limited powers, to keep armed American filibusters from going to help the Texans either as individuals or in semi-organized companies disguised as "immigrants." A violent attack on the United States Government for tolerating, if not conniving at, these breaches of neutrality was published by the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs in a Mexico City newspaper and led to strange results.

A stray copy of this paper fell into the hands of Commodore Ap Catesby Jones, a gallant but somewhat impulsive officer of Welsh descent, then commanding the Pacific squadron of the United States navy,

and convinced him that war must have broken out between the United States and Mexico. By the same mail—the first that had reached him for many months—Jones also received a Boston paper which declared that Mexico was about to cede California to Great Britain. These things, together with the accidental departure of the British fleet that had been lying with his own in the harbor of Callao, on the west coast of South America, were enough for Jones. Setting sail at once, he reached the harbor of Monterey, demanded and received the surrender of the astonished town, scared the 29 soldiers out of the fort and the governor into the interior—all on Wednesday, October 19, 1842. On Thursday the commodore landed his marines, hoisted the stars and stripes, annexed both Upper and Lower California, and delivered to the inhabitants an impressive proclamation that he had composed on his way up the coast. On Friday an American who kept a general store in Monterey came on board the flagship with a newspaper of later date. Discovering from this and the evidence of his own senses that there was no war and

no English annexation, Commodore Jones realized his error, hauled down his flag immediately, apologized like a gentleman, and sailed away.

The belief that England was planning to extend her empire and curtail the future growth of the United States, by annexing not only California but also "the Oregon country" and Texas, was almost universal among the American people at this time. It was less than thirty years since the War of 1812, the land operations of which had consisted mainly of a series of disastrous attempts on our part to invade Canada, and the danger of the creation of a second Canada to the south of us had been darkly portrayed by the aged Andrew Jackson, hero of the last war with Great Britain. The success of the mediators in obtaining a truce preliminary to negotiations for peace between Texas and Mexico, taken in conjunction with the well-known English zeal for the abolition of slavery, greatly alarmed the administration at Washington. In reply to a communication from Mr. Upshur, President Tyler's Secretary of State, Lord Aberdeen, the British premier, de-

clared that Great Britain while "constantly exerting herself to procure the general abolition of slavery throughout the world" was entertaining no "occult designs" in regard to either Mexico or Texas.

Forty-eight hours after this despatch was sent Upshur was killed, together with a number of other people, by the explosion of the great wrought-iron pivot gun "Peacemaker" on board the new cruiser *Princeton*, and John C. Calhoun became Secretary of State.

Both President Tyler and the new head of his Cabinet were Southerners and slave owners, who judged slavery from the mild paternalism of their own plantations and neighborhoods and regarded the abolitionists as misguided fanatics bent on the disruption of the Union. Both men were singularly free from the fear of political consequences or the ties of party allegiance. Elected Vice-President by the Whigs, to the slogan of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too!" in the roaring log-cabin-and-hard-cider campaign of 1840, Tyler had soon succeeded to the presidency on the death of his aged and infirm chief, General Harrison, and pres-

ently broke entirely with the party that had elected him. Calhoun, on his part, cared little for elective office but acted entirely on his own personal convictions, chief among which was a sincere belief in the righteousness of negro slavery. Accident or fate had placed in power the two men best fitted to reopen the vexed question of the annexation of Texas and set it squarely before the American people.

President Andrew Jackson had favored the annexation as well as the recognition of Texas, but his Congress had voted it down. Neither did it appeal, though repeatedly sought by the Texans themselves, to the Van Buren administration, which sought to maintain neutrality with Mexico and avoid stirring up unseemly controversies with the unpopular but rapidly growing faction of abolitionists by advocating what must be an extension of slave territory. Yet it became increasingly clear that the matter could not be put off indefinitely, for the 50,000 or 60,000 Texans with an empty treasury could not long defend an empty empire against 8,000,000 Mexicans if ever the latter stopped their

internal wars and turned their full strength to the subjugation of their "rebellious province." To guarantee peace with Mexico, Texas had either to enter the Union, as nine out of ten Texans desired, or, in the last extremity, seek the protection of some strong European power.

Within six weeks after he had become Secretary of State, Calhoun had negotiated and signed a treaty of annexation with Texas. But before it could be ratified by the United States Senate the two great political parties had held their national conventions for the approaching presidential campaign. Henry Clay, the Whig candidate, had shown himself indifferent, if not hostile to annexation, and as the Whig Senators were in the majority the treaty was lost.

The Democratic National Convention of 1844 was one of the most exciting and interesting in our political history.* It was the first to have its proceedings reported by telegraph, and the first in which there was either a "stampede" or the nomination of

* See Joseph Bucklin Bishop's "Presidential Nominations and Elections."

a "dark horse." Though their candidate was so little known in comparison to his illustrious opponent as to arouse the derisive cry of "Who *is* James K. Polk?" his platform appealed strongly to the popular spirit of the time by declaring boldly that "the reoccupation of Oregon and the reannexation of Texas are great American measures."

The Whigs, on the other hand, depended less on their platform—an uninspiring recital of minor issues—than on the character of their great but politically unfortunate candidate. If Clay had followed the shrewd advice of his managers and kept silence on the Texas question, beyond opposing immediate annexation, he would, in all probability, have been elected. But he had a fatal weakness for writing private letters on public affairs, and two of these letters, made public by his correspondents, cost him the presidency. In one, Clay deprecated the admission of Texas, because it would be "opposed to the wishes of a considerable and respectable portion of the Confederacy," which statement was interpreted as favoring the abolitionists and told

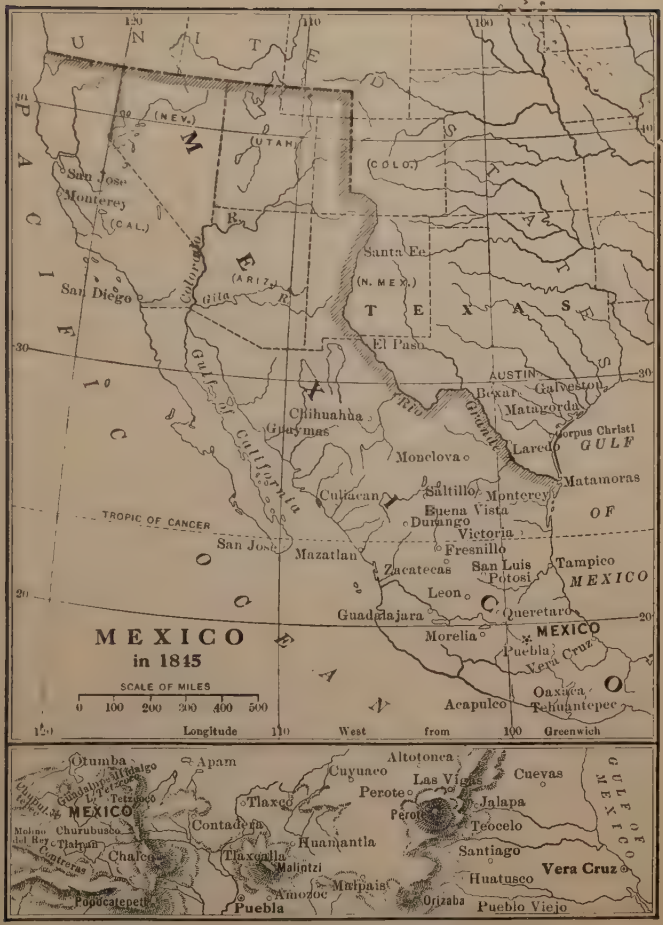
heavily against him in the South. In the second letter, Clay declared that he did not "think that the subject of slavery ought to affect the question one way or another." This turned against him the votes of the abolitionist or "Liberty Party," which held the balance of power in the closely contested and pivotal States of New York and Michigan. Those few thousand votes cost Henry Clay the thirty-six presidental electors from New York and made James K. Polk President of the United States.

President Tyler, who had come out for re-election on an independent ticket, with "Tyler and Texas" for his platform, soon went over to the Democrats and withdrew in favor of Polk. Encouraged by the result of the November elections, which had strengthened the Democratic majority in the House and created one in the Senate, Tyler urged the admission of Texas as a State by a joint resolution of Congress.

It was inevitable that the new member of the Union, both from its geographical position and the desire of its own people, should be a slave State. Ex-President John Quincy Adams, the leader of the anti-

slavery forces, had, curiously enough, been the first to advocate the annexation of Texas in 1824, and he now found some difficulty in explaining this apparent inconsistency. His real reasons for opposing the annexation of Texas were a genuine hatred of slavery and an equally genuine hatred of Andrew Jackson and all his works. The reasons he now advanced were, first, that Texas was still an integral part of Mexico, and, second, that the treaty-making power of the United States Government, while enabling it to annex uninhabited tracts of land, did not authorize bringing alien populations into the Union. Mr. Adams's first objection, however, was hardly in accordance with the established facts, and his second, though more worthy of consideration, was paid little heed to at the time. The best that the opponents of slavery could do was to limit its existence in the new territory to below the line of the Missouri Compromise, thus fixing the northern boundary of Texas at 36° 30′ north latitude.

The joint resolution, amended so as to give the President the option of reopening


MEXICO
in 1845
SCALE OF MILES
0 100 200 300 400 500
Longitude from Greenwich
UNITED STATES
PACIFIC OCEAN
GULF OF MEXICO
(NEV.)
UTAH
(COLO.)
(CAL.)
(ARIZ.)
(N. MEX.)
TEXAS
San Jose
Monterey
San Diego
Colorado R.
Gila R.
Santa Fe
El Paso
Rio Grande
AUSTIN
Bexar
Galveston
Matagorda
Corpus Christi
Laredo
GULF OF MEXICO
Matamoras
Monclova
Chihuahua
Gila
Saltillo
Monterey
Buena Vista
Durango
Victoria
Fresnillo
San Luis Potosi
Tampico
Zacatecas
Mazatlan
Culiacan
TROPIC OF CANCER
Leon
Queretaro
Guadalajara
Morelia
Puebla
Vera Cruz
Oaxaca
Tehuantepec
Acapulco
Otumba
Apam
Altotonca
Cuyuaco
Las Vigas
Cuevas
Perote
Jalapa
Tlaxco
Contadera
Teocelo
Huamantla
Santiago
Tlaxcalla
Malintzi
Vera Cruz
Huatusco
Amozoc
Malpais
Orizaba
Pueblo Viejo
Popocatepetl
Puebla

negotiations for the annexation of Texas, instead of directly admitting it as a State, passed Congress and was promptly signed by President Tyler on March 1, 1845. Instead of negotiating or waiting for his successor to act, Tyler immediately submitted the offer to Texas.

Mediation between Texas and Mexico had so far progressed that the preliminaries of a treaty were actually signed on March 19 and May 29. Mexico, yielding to the urgent warning of the French and English mediators, was ready to acknowledge the independence of Texas, if the latter would pledge herself never to suffer annexation by the United States. But these concessions had been made too late.

With scarcely a dissenting vote, the Texas Congress, on June 16, a Texan national convention on the 4th of July, and the people themselves at a special election held the following October, chose to accept the offer of the United States. President Polk signed the final resolution of Congress, admitting the State of Texas on December 19, 1845.

More than nine months before, between

Tyler's offer to Texas and Polk's inauguration, Señor Almonte, the Mexican minister, had demanded his passports and left the United States, protesting against the threatened disintegration of his country and breathing dire threats of war.

CHAPTER VI

CAUSES OF THE WAR

WHAT were the causes of our first war with Mexico?

To the abolitionists of the period the answer was simply: Slavery. Their version of Texan history was well summed up in a pamphlet published over the signature of John Quincy Adams and twelve other members of Congress in March, 1843. It declared that the settlement of American citizens in Texas, the creations of differences with the Mexican Government, the setting up of an independent republic, and the frustration of Mexico's attempts to subdue "her revolted province," had all been brought about by the machinations of the American slave owners, through the Federal Government they controlled. The purpose of this deep-laid plot was to bring about the annexation of Texas and the creation from its territories of three or four new slave States. This, Mr. Adams declared, would

"eternize slavery," cause war with Mexico, and justify the withdrawal of the free States from the Union.*

This publication had little effect in the United States at the time, but it created a great impression in Mexico by its confirmation of Alaman's theory of an "American conspiracy." Like his fellow scholar and statesman, Alaman, Adams was actuated by high and patriotic motives, but unconsciously distorted the facts to fit his own fervid convictions. As a campaign document, illustrating his party's point of view, Mr. Adams's pamphlet has great historical value, but to regard it as an impartial chronicle of past events is ludicrous. Yet from the triumph of the abolition cause in the Civil War until very recently most ac-

*These charges were based partly upon the observations of Benjamin Lundy, an abolitionist who travelled through Texas in 1835, and partly upon the indiscreet action of General Gaines, commanding the United States forces on the Texas border in 1836. Importuned by refugees fleeing before the advance of Santa Anna, Gaines wilfully mistook the Mexicans for "Indians," and sent nine companies of United States infantry into Texas as far as Nacogdoches. Though this was an outrageous affront to Mexico that was never properly apologized for by the United States, it was undertaken solely on General Gaines's own initiative and had no effect on the outcome of the San Jacinto campaign. But, like Jones's exploit at Monterey, it lent color to the "conspiracy theory."

counts of our first war in Mexico have been based, consciously or unconsciously, rather upon these excited assertions, made in the heat of a bitter fight, than upon a careful review of the facts. But now that that fight has been won and slavery has been dead for half a century and more, there is no longer any reason either to fear that any sane man will come forward in defense of that ancient evil, or for us to continue to charge the slave owners with a needless, unproved conspiracy to gain an unprofitable end.

No "conspiracy" was needed to create the republic of Texas. If there had not been a single negro slave in all North America some Moses Austin would nevertheless have led American settlers into Texas, where they would sooner or later have quarrelled with the Mexicans over home rule, the tariff, and religious freedom, won their independence and sought admission into the Union. But because negro slavery did exist both in Texas and the Southern States of the Union, the entrance of Texas was vehemently sought by slavery's friends and fought by slavery's foes, till another

element brought aid and victory to the former.

Analysis of Polk's support at the polls shows us what this element was. While he carried eight slave States to Clay's five, Polk also received the electoral vote of seven free States to his opponent's six, including two in New England and, what is particularly significant, the entire northwest.

Not only slavery but Oregon helped bring Texas into the Union. For a quarter of a century there had been a conscious pairing-off of new States, slave and free, on either side of the line established by the Missouri Compromise. The danger to this jealously preserved balance of power that many besides the abolitionists saw in the admission of Texas, out of which three or four new slave States might be made, was now met and counterbalanced by the proposed admission of an even greater expanse of free territory to the north. The time had not yet come when the American people were to realize the great truth that Abraham Lincoln was presently to declare: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. . . .

The Union cannot endure half slave and half free." To the men of Polk's generation his coupling of the "reoccupation of Oregon and the re-annexation of Texas" in his platform seemed not only shrewd politics but sound statesmanship. His policy accorded with both the compromising and the adventurous spirits of the age. The current of expansion to the northwest joined with the current of expansion to the southwest and together swept away all opposition.

But after Texas was safely in the Union slavery had little or nothing more to gain by a war with Mexico, nor had it any need to force that conflict. In the words of Professor Garrison, of the University of Texas:

"No theory of a conspiracy is needed to explain the war with Mexico. While it was strongly opposed and condemned by a bold and outspoken minority, the votes in Congress and the utterances of the contemporaneous journals show that it was essentially a popular movement, both in Mexico and in the United States. The disagreement reached the verge of an outbreak in 1837, and the only thing that pre-

vented a conflict then was that Congress was a bit more conservative than the President. But neither the aggressiveness of Jackson nor even that of Polk would have been so likely to end in actual fighting, had it not been well understood that they were backed by sympathetic majorities."*

If there was no conspiracy, what, then, brought about the war?

The primary but not the sole cause was our annexation of Texas and Mexico's resentment of that action. In the second place were the unpaid claims, amounting to more than $5,000,000, of American citizens against the Mexican Government for property seized or destroyed during past revolutions. In the third place was the desire of the United States to annex California.

President Polk considered these three things and evolved a plan. Though diplomatic relations had been broken off before his inauguration, he endeavored to reach a peaceful settlement and persuaded the Mexican Government to receive an American minister. This envoy, Mr. John Slidell,

* Hart's "American Nation," vol. XVII, p. 202.

was instructed to obtain Mexico's recognition of our right to annex Texas by offering her indirect compensation, in the form of an extra large price for the purchase of California and as much of New Mexico as could be obtained for not more than $25,000,000. This purchase price was to include the assumption by the United States Government of the otherwise uncollectible claims of American citizens against Mexico. This proposition seemed perfectly reasonable and generous to Polk, who laid much stress on the precedent of Spain's cession of Florida in 1819 in return for the assumption by the United States of $5,000,000 worth of bad debts to American citizens from the Spanish crown. Mexico's hold on her distant province of California in 1846 was almost as feeble as Spain's on Florida in 1819, and her financial condition was fully as bad.

From the War of Independence till the present day Mexico's unpaid debts have been a fruitful source of shame and suffering to that country. Except during the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz the government has changed hands so rapidly, the treasury

has been so empty, and the people, particularly those of the capital, so prone to regard the payment of foreign debts as an unpatriotic surrender, that few of Mexico's creditors have been paid in full.

One effective bit of debt collecting was the bombardment and seizure of Vera Cruz by a French fleet in 1838, which also caused the restoration in popular favor of General Santa Anna. Intrusted with the defense of Vera Cruz after its capture, he prudently waited till the French sailors and marines were re-embarking, when the Mexicans exchanged a few shots with them resulting in the "repulse" of the French and the loss of Santa Anna's left leg. The "Hero of Tampico" was now hailed as the "Hero of Vera Cruz," and within three years he was able to make himself once more President of Mexico.

How Santa Anna ruled and robbed his country in shabby pomp, how he had six colonels in full-dress uniform stand behind his chair at dinner, how he gave his own left leg a magnificent military funeral, how the people rose in exasperation, drove Santa Anna into exile, dug up his left leg and

dragged it disrespectfully through the streets of Mexico City, can be best read in the delightful memoirs of Madame Calderon, the American wife of the Spanish minister to Mexico at that interesting period.

President Herrera, who succeeded Santa Anna, was not the leader of a mere clique of successful mutineers, but had been placed in power by something approaching a genuine popular movement. Yet because his government consented to receive Mr. Slidell and discuss, however reluctantly, the recognition of the annexation of Texas, the settlement of the American claims, and the cession of California, Herrera was promptly driven out of office by a revolution under the leadership of General Paredes, commanding the Army of the North. The American envoy took ship at Vera Cruz, and President Paredes loudly declared that the time had come "to appeal to the honor of Mexican arms."

James K. Polk has been severely criticised for his aggressive attitude toward Mexico at this point, but his critics usually omit to say anything of General Mariano Paredes y Arillaga. No one would attempt to write a

history of President Wilson's relations with Mexico and leave out all mention of Generals Victoriano Huerta and Venustiano Carranza, yet Paredes was fully as reactionary as the former and as impossible to reason with as the latter. As Mr. Rives points out, he was a vainglorious incompetent, who believed in the invincibility of Mexican arms and the restoration of monarchical rule. Like Santa Anna, whom he had recalled to power with a mutiny in 1841 and driven out with another one in 1844, Paredes had been an officer in the Spanish army till the declaration of independence by Iturbide.* To deal with a Mexican ruler of this kind would have exhausted the patience of a far more diplomatic President than stubborn, narrow-minded James K. Polk. With two such men placed respectively in the White House and the Palacio Nacional at such a time war was inevitable.

It was at this point that Santa Anna, from his exile in Cuba, sent a confidential agent to Washington with the suggestion that if he were helped by Polk to return to Mexico, Santa Anna would then drive out

* "Rives," vol. I, p. 27.

Paredes, make himself President, and negotiate the desired treaty with the United States. Though Santa Anna afterward denied ever making such an offer, there is abundant evidence, including Polk's own diary, that it was not only made but accepted. But before it could be carried into effect hostilities had already begun.

The immediate cause of the war was the advance of the United States forces in Texas, which had been encamped at Corpus Christi, near the mouth of the Nueces River, to the east bank of the Rio Grande. Though the Mexicans had continually maintained that all Texas was still a part of their country, they had made no protest about its occupation by United States troops until Taylor crossed the Nueces. By this action, they declared, he had left Texas and invaded the Department of Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon, in Mexico.

The western boundary of Texas, both as a Spanish and a Mexican province, had undoubtedly been the Nueces River. The claim of the Texans that their republic extended to the Rio Grande rested, first, on a secret treaty to that effect, signed by Santa

Anna immediately after the battle of San Jacinto, but promptly declared void by the Mexican Government; and, second, on conquest and the retreat of the Mexican armies to the west bank of the Rio Grande. The country between the two rivers was claimed by both sides, but effectively occupied by neither. It was in reality a No Man's Land, settled here and there by squatters and riff-raff from both nations.

The Texan title by conquest was at least a debatable one, but Polk rested his claim squarely upon the old disproved fable of a French title to Texas derived from La Salle's settlement, acquired by the United States with the Louisiana Purchase, and surrendered to Spain by the Florida Treaty (see pages 8 and 9). On a revival of this non-existent and solemnly renounced right, Polk based the plank in his platform urging "the reannexation of Texas," as is shown by his subsequent assertion that "the Texas which was ceded to Spain by the Florida Treaty of 1819 embraced all the country now claimed by the State of Texas between the Nueces and the Rio Grande."*

* Message to Congress, December, 1846.

There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Polk's belief in this notorious fable of American history. Very many others, including Henry Clay, Polk's recent rival for the presidency, had, at one time or another, entertained this belief. The total influence of this historical error in bringing about our first war with Mexico is incalculable.

Did Polk, by ordering Taylor to advance to the Rio Grande, deliberately plan to provoke a war in the interest of slavery?

What Polk and the South could have expected to gain by so doing is not easy to prove. The South had already gained its great object in the annexation of Texas, and had no corresponding interest in California. Polk ardently desired California, but still hoped to obtain it peacefully. And he was not unaware that his election had been due to Northern as well as Southern votes and that an expensive and unpopular war might well cost the Democratic party its majority in Congress, as in fact it did at the congressional elections in the following autumn.

Polk's motive in ordering Taylor's advance seems to have been twofold. By

thus taking possession of the disputed territory he expected, first, to put the United States in a stronger position to negotiate for that territory, and, second, to give the United States army a good base from which to operate should negotiations fail and war ensue. By exactly such an aggressive policy Polk was even then carrying to a triumphant conclusion the negotiations with Great Britain, which began with an American migration into Oregon to the cry of "Fifty-four Forty or Fight," and ended, because neither side wanted to fight but was ready to do so if necessary, in a peaceful and honorable compromise at the forty-ninth parallel. Because these strong, blunt methods had succeeded with England, Polk thought that would be equally effective with Mexico.

Because Spain had prudently preferred giving up Florida in payment of five million dollars' worth of American claims to losing it in a disastrous war with the United States in 1819, Polk saw no reason why Mexico should not follow the same course with California in 1846, especially as the United States was offering a substantial cash bonus,

over and above the assumption of debts. He overlooked the fact that while the Spanish people in 1819 did not care a maravedi about Florida, the Mexican people in 1846 were ready to make short work of any Mexican executive that "surrendered" Texas and California to the hated Americans of the North.

In the last analysis, Polk's great error lay in overestimating the yielding and underestimating the explosive elements of the Mexican character. We can understand this the more readily when we consider how seventy years later another President of the United States, infinitely less aggressive and more intelligent than James K. Polk, almost failed for the same reasons to prevent American intervention and our second war in Mexico.

CHAPTER VII

PALO ALTO AND RESACA DE LA PALMA

THE advance-guard of General Taylor's army, part of which had marched overland from Corpus Christi and the rest had been transported by sea to the new base at Point Isabel, reached the east bank of the Rio Grande, opposite the Mexican town of Matamoros, on March 28, 1846. Great excitement and resentment were displayed by the Mexicans, who immediately threw up batteries on their side of the river. Taylor therefore had his engineers construct a large quadrangular earthwork or "strong bastioned field-fort." From the name of its commander this was presently named Fort Brown, and became the nucleus of the present city of Brownsville.

General Ampudia, commanding the Mexican Army of the North that had been assembled at Matamoros, sent Taylor an ultimatum on April 12 ordering him to with-

draw within twenty-four hours toward the far bank of the Nueces. Instead of complying, Taylor arranged with the naval escort that had accompanied his transports to Point Isabel, for a blockade of the mouth of the Rio Grande. This warlike act cut off the Mexican army from its main source of supplies, and was the last straw that broke the back of Mexico's patience.

President Paredes issued a proclamation on the 23d of April, declaring that:

". . . Hostilities therefore have been begun by the United States of America, who have undertaken new conquests lying within the line of the Department of Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon, while the troops of the United States are threatening Monterey in Upper California. . . .* From this day defensive war begins, and every point of our territory which may be invaded or attacked shall be defended with force."

General Arista, who had supplanted Ampudia in command, led the Mexican army across the Rio Grande on the 24th. Captain Thornton's troop of the Second United States Dragoons, on scouting duty,

* See page 98.

were surprised and captured by an overwhelming force of Mexicans on the following day. Thornton alone escaped by leaping his horse over a hedge, and carried the news to General Taylor, who immediately notified Washington of the outbreak of hostilities and, as he had been previously authorized to do in such an emergency, called on the governors of Texas and Louisiana for eight regiments of volunteers.

Fearing that the Mexicans would try to cut him off from his base, Taylor retreated on May 1 with the main body of his army to Point Isabel. Two companies of artillery and the Seventh Infantry were left under Major Brown to hold the fort opposite Matamoros. Arista's army invested the fort and bombarded it for several days, both from the Matamoros batteries and with guns planted in the rear of the work. Little damage was done to the fort and only two of the garrison were killed, but one of these was Major Brown.

Hearing the cannonade and having obtained a strong guard of sailors and marines from the fleet to hold Point Isabel, Taylor

turned back on May 6. Arista had marched to meet him, and on the 8th the two armies met on the open prairie at Palo Alto, or "Tall Timber."

Deducting the thousand or so left in observation outside Fort Brown, Arista had approximately 4,000 men with which to face Taylor's 2,300. The bulk of the Mexican force consisted of four large battalions of regular infantry—patient, plodding conscripts who had been released from jail or kidnapped from civil life into the ragged ranks of the standing army. Half-trained, ill-disciplined, and seldom paid, these troops were nevertheless celebrated for their ability to make long marches, and, until their spirit had been broken by continuous defeats, were not afraid to face the Americans in the open field.

As for the rank and file of Taylor's army, a typical company of United States regulars at this time "consisted of 60 men, including non-commissioned officers and privates; of these 2 were English, 4 Scotch, 7 Germans, 16 Americans, and the remainder Irish."* Their high-collared, bobtailed

* Ballentine, "An English Soldier in Mexico," p. 91.

jackets were rendered still more uncomfortable by barbarous old-fashioned leather stocks; otherwise the dark-blue uniforms were plain and serviceable, if rather hot for a semitropical climate. The soft-topped, bell-crowned American forage-caps of 1846 were shaped very much like those worn by the British officers in Flanders in 1916. Unlike Flanders there was not a single trench dug or fought in from beginning to end of our first war in Mexico except at the siege of Vera Cruz.

There was little need to dig shelters from the infantry fire when both sides were armed with smooth-bore, muzzle-loading flintlock muskets. Percussion-lock rifles, though well known and widely used by civilian sportsmen, were still distrusted by the conservative military mind. There was a great difference, however, between the American and Mexican flintlocks. The former, made at the Springfield arsenal, were the best in the world, the latter "were all of British manufacture and had the Tower mark on their locks; but they were old and worn out, having evidently been condemned as unserviceable in the British

army and then sold to the Mexicans at a low price."*

As for the cavalry of the two armies, the American dragoons were much inferior in numbers to the Mexican lancers and equally superior in every other respect. Though northern Mexico is a country of born horsemen and as admirably adapted for mounted infantry tactics as was South Africa in 1900, the Mexican trooper of 1846 was neither a mounted sharpshooter like the Boer nor an old-fashioned cavalryman who could charge home with the cold steel. His clumsy *escopeta*, or carbine, made him of little use when dismounted, and his gayly pennoned lance was more often thrust through the bodies of American wounded than crossed with the bayonets of even broken and disordered American infantry. But the two regiments of United States dragoons were the crack corps of the American army. Gallantly led, well armed with carbine, sabre, and pistol, and mounted on chargers that dwarfed the undersized Mexican ponies, Twiggs's and Kearny's dragoons were ready and eager to uphold the

* Ballentine, p. 199.

traditions of Light-Horse Harry Lee and Mad Anthony Wayne.*

At Palo Alto, Arista had twelve pieces of artillery, Taylor two light field-batteries of four guns each and two eighteen-pounders drawn by oxen. The Mexican cannon were beautifully cast in bronze, many of them bearing the crown and arms of Spain, with dates and inscriptions like "Barcelona, 1774," or "Cadiz, 1767." Mounted on clumsy wooden carriages, these ponderous relics were incapable of being quickly limbered up and moved from one part of the battle-field to another, but were rather regarded as fixtures once the Mexicans had succeeded in bringing up and "placing their cumbersome artillery in position, which was ill proportioned to the poor little mules that had to draw it."† The United States field artillery, on the other hand, had been brought to a high state of efficiency. (The ox-drawn battery, mentioned above, was an exceptional makeshift.) Its light, mod-

* The American people are still spoken of among certain of our Indian tribes as the "Long Knives," a name derived from the sabres of Wayne's dragoons at the battle of the Fallen Timbers in 1794.

† Davis, "Jefferson Davis," I, 340.

ern six-pounders, each drawn by two pairs of horses, dashed up and swung into battery in a way to make the Americans boast of "the Flying Artillery," and the Mexicans marvelled to behold "the Northern horses thunder with the cannon at their heels."

But the greatest difference between the two armies was in the officers. Most of the Spanish veterans in the Mexican service were now superannuated. On the other hand, the National Military Academy at Chapultepec had not been founded till 1833, and its work had been much impeded and interrupted by chronic poverty and frequent revolutions. Both its few trained graduates and the untrained political appointees from civil life who made up the great mass of officers had seen more or less active service in the endless fighting between the constantly shifting military factions, where each learned to mistrust his comrade as a possible future foe.

As for the American officers, to quote one of them who was at that time a young second lieutenant in the Fourth Infantry:

"Every officer, from the highest to the

lowest, was educated in his profession—not at West Point necessarily, but in the camp, in garrison, and many of them in Indian wars. . . . A better army, man for man, probably never faced an enemy than the one commanded by General Taylor in the earliest two engagements of the Mexican War."*

Zachary Taylor, who at this time, at the age of sixty-one, was only a colonel in actual rank but had been brevetted a brigadier-general by Polk, was a native of northern Virginia, whose parents had taken him with them to Kentucky when he was ten years old. Entering the army in the War of 1812, Taylor had distinguished himself by his defense of Fort Harrison against the Indians, and he had served in the Black Hawk and the Seminole Wars. His appearance was anything but military, for he almost never wore a uniform and was fond of riding with both his legs hanging over the same side of the horse. But he was a hard fighter and a born handler of men. His soldiers affectionately nicknamed him "Old Rough and Ready," and declared,

* "Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant," I, 130.

in the words of a popular ballad of the period:*

"Though our General at best was indifferently dressed,
In a dingy green frock coat and in pants of cottonade,
And a broken old straw hat, still we did not care for that. . . ."

The battle of Palo Alto was an artillery duel, the infantry on either side being drawn up in solid ranks, just out of musket range. Not only had Taylor fewer men in line than his opponent, but he was also obliged to detach a strong body of infantry and a squadron of dragoons to protect the supply-train of three hundred wagons parked in the American rear. But his two eighteen-pounders in the centre and the light battery on either flank made terrible havoc in the close-packed Mexican ranks with accurate shell fire, while the copper cannon-balls from the Mexican guns flew so slowly through the air that the Americans usually saw them coming in time to open ranks and let the solid shot pass

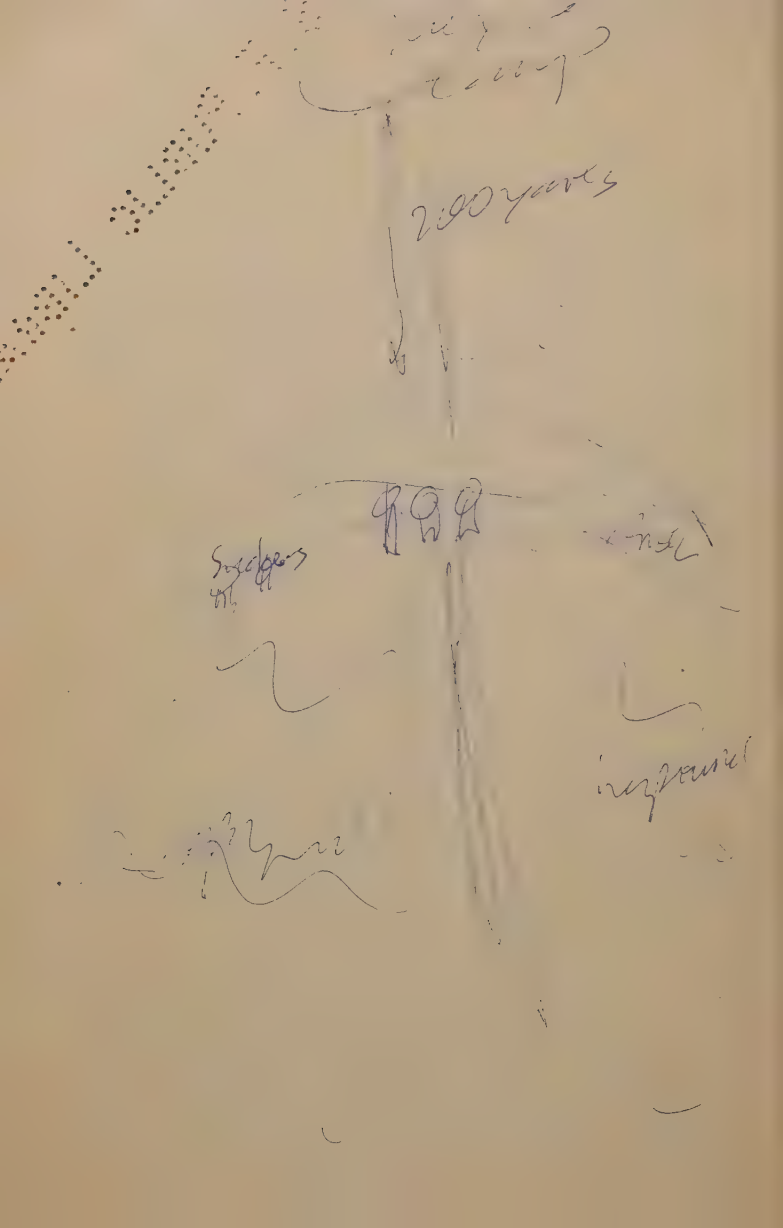
* M'Carty's "National Songs, 1846."

harmlessly by. After his men had suffered helplessly at long range for an hour, while they implored him either to advance or retreat, Arista made a half-hearted and quickly checked forward movement against the American right flank. The long prairie grass was set on fire by burning wadding, and under cover of the smoke Arista attempted to turn Taylor's left, at the same time sending a body of lancers to renew the attack on the right. There the Fifth United States Infantry expectantly formed a hollow square, in the centre of which was Taylor himself, but the Mexican cavalry did not press their charge, and their infantry were soon driven back by artillery fire. Thereafter both sides remained inactive till nightfall, when Arista made good his retreat under cover of darkness. His official report placed the total Mexican loss in killed and wounded at 252, which was probably an underestimate. The American loss was 9 killed, including the senior artillery officer, Major Ringgold; 44 wounded, and 2 missing.

Falling back to within three miles of Fort Brown, Arista's army took up a strong

After the drawing by C. Nebel.

The Battle of Palo Alto.


200 years

position at Resaca de la Palma. This "Palm-Tree Ravine" was one of a chain of depressions and lakes that marked the course of an abandoned bed of the Rio Grande. Steep-banked and dry-bottomed, it was shaped like a crescent with the points toward the Americans, and lay directly athwart the Point Isabel road, down which they must advance. On either side of this road the ground was covered with so dense a growth of sharp-thorned *chaparral* as to be impassable to either cavalry or artillery. Behind this natural "barbed-wire entanglement" the Mexican infantry lined the near bank of the ravine, exposing only their heads and shoulders. Most of Arista's regulars were on the right of his concave line, the left being held by one regular battalion, the Tampico veterans, and the various irregular and local troops, supported by two field-pieces. Three other Mexican guns were planted in the centre to sweep the road. Behind their infantry supports were the remaining guns and the cavalry in reserve, while only two hundred yards back of the firing-line lay the Mexican camp.

A council of war, summoned by General Taylor after the fight at Palo Alto, voted against an advance, but "Old Rough and Ready" overrode this advice. Leaving the wounded and the wagon-train with a strong guard of infantry inside a hastily thrown-up earthwork armed with the two eighteen-pounders and a couple of twelve-pounders that had been carried unmounted in the train, he led the rest of his little army in pursuit of the Mexicans, and came in touch with them at Resaca de la Palma about four o'clock on the afternoon of the 9th of May.

Deploying his infantry to the left and right of the road, Taylor drove in the Mexican left, but their stronger right wing resisted stubbornly. Realizing that the three guns on the road were the keystone of the defense, Taylor ordered Captain May to charge and take them with his squadron of dragoons. Covered by a round of grape-shot from an American battery, May's troopers charged down the road in column of fours, rode over the Mexican guns, cut down the artillerymen, drove in the infantry supports, wheeled and cut their

way out again, bringing with them a captured general as a trophy of this gallant little charge that moved even a Mexican poet to sing its praise:

> "On they came, those Northern horsemen,
> On like eagles through the sun,
> Behind them came the Northern bayonet
> And the field was lost and won."

"The Northern bayonet," in the capable hands of the Eighth Infantry and part of the Fifth, followed hard on the heels of the dragoons. Ridgely's battery galloped up to the edge of the ravine, unlimbered and poured grape-shot into the very faces of the Mexican infantry. General Arista, who up to this time had refused to believe that any serious attack was contemplated and had been writing in his tent, now dropped his pen and ran out to rally his cavalry and other reserves for a counter-charge. But the American infantry massed on the road and scattered through the *chaparral* met them with so hot a fire that the Mexicans broke and fled.

The last Mexican to leave the field was

the brave color-sergeant of the Tampico veterans, who vainly tried to rally the battalion whose colors he had saved. Hundreds of muskets and all the cannon were abandoned by the flying army. When the Americans entered the captured camp, they found the fires burning, five hundred pack-mules tethered and their packs arranged neatly on the ground, and General Arista's personal baggage and private letters were still in his tent.

Hotly pursued by the American dragoons and field-batteries, General Arista and what was left of his army fled through the gathering darkness to the Rio Grande. The guns of Fort Brown opened at long range on the demoralized fugitives huddled together on the bank or crowded into the one tiny ferry-boat, and many were drowned in the flooded river before the survivors found temporary shelter behind the batteries of Matamoros. The total Mexican loss was conservatively estimated, in Arista's official report, at 262 killed, 355 wounded, and 185 missing. Thirty-nine Americans had been killed and 82 wounded.

On the day of the battle of Resaca de la

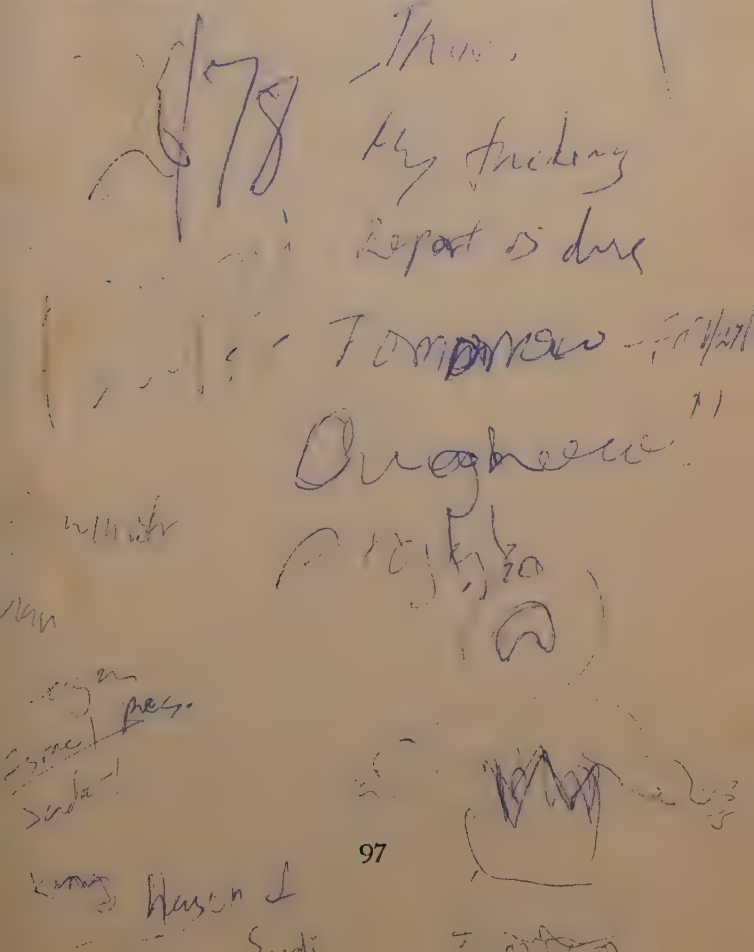
Palma the news reached Washington of the outbreak of hostilities and the capture of Thornton's dragoons. The following day was Sunday, and Polk spent it in writing a message to Congress which was delivered on Monday morning. Rehearsing his version of the grievances of the United States against Mexico, Polk declared:

"Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory, and shed American blood upon American soil. She has proclaimed that hostilities have commenced and that the two nations are now at war. I invoke the prompt action of Congress to recognize the existence of the war, and to place at the disposition of the executive the means of prosecuting the war with vigor and thus hastening the restoration of peace. To this end I recommend that authority be given to call into the public service a large body of volunteers to serve for not less than six or twelve months, unless sooner discharged. . . . I further recommend that a liberal provision be made for sustaining our entire military force and furnishing it with supplies and munitions of war. . . ."

Spurred by the wide-spread fears for the safety of Taylor's little army, known to be facing superior numbers of the enemy, Congress quickly carried out the President's recommendations. A bill that was passed by the House of Representatives that same Monday, by the Senate on Tuesday, and made a law by the President's signature on Wednesday, May 13, declared that, whereas, "By the act of the Republic of Mexico, a state of war exists between that government and the United States," the President was authorized to call for 50,000 volunteers to serve for twelve months or the war. Ten million dollars were appropriated to defray the first costs of the conflict.

All our wars have been popular at the beginning, and the first Mexican War began with two brilliant victories that evoked an outburst of national enthusiasm comparable to that caused fifty-two years later by the battle of Manila Bay. Throughout the country bonfires blazed, volunteer companies began to drill, and mass meetings cheered the army and pledged their support to the administration. Confident in

the nation's support, Polk and his advisers proceeded to the easiest and most profitable part of the war, the conquest of California and the southwest.



CHAPTER VIII

THE CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA

THOUGH the Jesuits had maintained missions on the arid shores of Lower California since the end of the seventeenth century, it was not until after the expulsion of the Society of Jesus from Spanish America in 1767 that the colonization of Upper California began. It was prompted by the fear that the English—or perhaps the "Muscovites" from Russian America—were about to found a colony at Monterey; the same fear that brought about the seizure of that port seventy-five years later by Commodore Jones.* The Franciscan friars, to whom the work was now intrusted, made fast progress under the energetic leadership of the famous Brother Junipero Serro, and with the not always helpful assistance of the Spanish colonial office. From San Diego to San Francisco missions were

* Richman, "California," chap. V.

easily established among the lazy, degenerate California Indians. Each mission was indifferently guarded by a detachment of "Presidial troops"—not regular soldiers, but half-disciplined military colonists, who debauched the converts and quarrelled with the friars. Very few civilian settlers could be induced to go from Mexico to California, though it was a veritable lazy man's paradise. Wheat was so easily grown that there was bread enough for all, cattle and sheep abounded, and wild horses were so plentiful that they were sometimes killed as vermin.

Even before the Mexican War of Independence, which destroyed the already decaying authority of the friars, but was otherwise unfelt in this far region of New Spain, English, Russian, and American traders were plying up and down the coast of California. The Californians were too glad to be able to buy English hardware and Yankee "notions" to pay much heed to either Spanish or Mexican prohibitive tariffs, yet they were too lazy to flay and clean the hides of their own cattle the traders wished to buy, but left this work to

the sailors, as you may read in Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast."

Even more stringent than Mexico's tariff on foreign goods was Mexico's ban on foreign settlers in California. But it was inevitable that the systematic evasion of the former should lead to the nullification of the latter. Sailors deserted their ships to turn beach-combers, agents acquired residences, and traders built stores in every port in California. To be sure, these outlanders remained with the tacit permission of the Californians. But presently a newer, rougher, and more numerous foreign element appeared, that cared no more about native Californians and Mexican laws than Miles Standish did for the Pequot Indians and their tribal customs. These rude intruders were the American frontiersmen who came in ever-increasing numbers, year after year, over the passes of the Rockies or down from Oregon, to spy out the rich lands of California and gradually to form their own settlements in the Sacramento Valley. Unlike the Texans, these Americans on the Pacific coast had neither been invited into the country nor granted

tracts of land. They had no legal right to remain in California, and did so simply because the Californian government, whose leaders were constantly organizing petty "revolutions" either against each other or against the distant rulers in Mexico City, was too weak to evict them. These American squatters were only too ready to start fighting on their own account at the first rumor of hostilities between Mexico and the United States.

"If you ascertain with certainty that Mexico has declared war against the United States," read the standing orders that Polk had sent to Commodore Sloat, who had succeeded the impulsive Jones in command of the Pacific squadron, "you will at once possess yourself of the port of San Francisco and blockade or occupy such other ports as your force will permit."

New orders to Sloat, bidding him "in the event of actual hostilities" to seize the ports without further delay, were sent out in November, 1845, by the frigate *Congress*, commanded by Commodore Stockton, who was also charged with a confidential letter to Mr. Larkin, the American consul at

Monterey. As a secret agent of his government, Larkin was "to cultivate the goodwill and friendship of the Californians," whether California was sold by Mexico to the United States, or revolted from Mexico and wished to enter the Union, or was conquered by the United States in case Mexico declared war.

Because the *Congress* was to make a long passage by way of Cape Horn and Hawaii, a cipher copy of the orders to Sloat and verbal instructions to Larkin were intrusted to Lieutenant Gillespie of the Marine Corps, who was to disguise himself as a civilian travelling for pleasure and hasten overland to California through Mexico. Gillespie also took with him private letters from Senator Benton to Benton's son-in-law, Captain Fremont.

John Charles Fremont, the son of a French father and a Virginian mother, was born in Savannah, Georgia, on January 21, 1813. He taught mathematics in the navy, became a railroad surveyor, and was appointed a second lieutenant in the corps of topographical engineers in 1838. After his marriage to the daughter of Thomas H.

Benton, in 1842, Fremont was detailed to make important explorations in the West, and greatly distinguished himself by his daring, his accurate surveys, and his vivid accounts of hitherto little-known regions. He had followed the Oregon trail from St. Louis, up the north fork of the Platte, and across the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains in 1842. During the following year he had explored the Salt Lake region, revisited Oregon, and descended the Columbia River to the Pacific, crossed the Sierra Nevada in midwinter into California, disproved the existence of the mythical "River Buenaventura," then supposed to flow into San Francisco Bay, and returned south through the San Joaquin Valley and east by the Spanish trail from Los Angeles.

On his third expedition, in the summer of 1845, Fremont had with him a party of fifty men of the topographical corps, and after making explorations in the uninhabited northern part of California, where the Mexican authorities had given them tacit permission to go, he led his force into inhabited Mexican territory near Monterey. To General José Castro, the commanding

officer of that district, Fremont explained that his men were not soldiers but civilians, surveying a route from the United States to the Pacific. But they had no passports, so Castro ordered them out of the country. Whereat Fremont built a log fort only a few miles from Monterey, hoisted the stars and stripes, and breathed bombastic defiance to Castro. The protestations of Consul Larkin and the assembling of a force by Castro compelled Fremont to withdraw to the Sacramento Valley and thence to Oregon, where he prepared to return east. He had already accomplished sufficient mischief, for his behavior before Monterey was one of the reasons given by President Paredes for declaring war.

But on the 9th of May, 1846, Fremont met Lieutenant Gillespie at Klamath Lake, Oregon, and received from him the letters from Senator Benton. Fremont afterward claimed that Gillespie also brought him the news of the outbreak of the Mexican War, but that would have been a physical impossibility, for that news had only reached Washington on that very day, the day of Resaca de la Palma. Fremont likewise

professed to have been given at the same time mysterious secret orders from President Polk that justified his subsequent behavior, but what these were he never revealed, nor would he divulge the contents of his father-in-law's letters. From what we now know of the state of Benton's knowledge at the time of writing them, these letters could have contained nothing more definite than a suggestion that Fremont remain on the coast to await developments in view of possible hostilities with Mexico or a possible seizure of California by Great Britain.

The only secret orders known to have been sent by Polk to any one in California were his instructions to Consul Larkin to "cultivate the good-will and friendship of the Californians" in any case, but primarily to reconcile them to the purchase of California by the United States. When he sent those instructions in November, 1845, Polk fully expected to carry out that purchase, and it would have been utterly foreign to his purpose to have created a second secret agent to deliberately undo the work of the first. It is much easier to believe that the erratic Fremont, whose conceit far out-

weighed both his discretion and his sense of duty and who was burning to revenge himself on José Castro for having "humiliated" him before Monterey, proceeded to act on his own initiative.

We now come to the famous incident of "Fremont's Ride." According to his own account, Fremont learned that the "Spaniards" were about to attack the American settlers in California, dashed back across the mountains, rallied the Americans, and saved California to the United States. As a matter of fact, when Fremont returned to California, at the same time deliberately deceiving Gillespie about his intentions to return to the East, no attacks were being made by the Mexicans on the Americans. To be sure, General José Castro had assembled an "army" of 70 men, but he was planning to use it against his old rival in office, Governor Pio Pico. Nevertheless, the mustering of this force, together with the affair before Monterey, the mysterious comings and goings of United States officers, the appearance of American war-ships off the coast, and a thousand and one disquieting rumors, most of which seem to have been

born in Fremont's camp, was enough to stir the suspicious and fight-loving American settlers to a revolt of their own.

A band of Americans, prompted by Fremont, stole a herd of horses destined for Castro's camp on June 10. Sonoma, the largest Mexican settlement north of San Francisco Bay, was captured without resistance four days later, and there 33 Americans hoisted a "banner with the strange device" of a grizzly bear, and proclaimed the Californian Republic. The insurgents confidently appealed for aid to Commander Montgomery, of the U. S. S. *Portsmouth*, then lying in San Francisco Bay, but that officer very properly maintained a strict neutrality. Fremont, however, lost no time in joining the "Bear" party. Under his leadership the little village of Yerba Buena, or San Francisco, was seized and the guns spiked in its deserted presidio. The "Bears" now numbered 200 men, and had already fought a preliminary skirmish with the Mexicans, whose leaders, Pico and Castro, had sunk their differences and joined their forces in the presence of a common enemy.

But before serious hostilities began, Commander Montgomery received important orders from Commodore Sloat. That aged and infirm officer had waited several days even after he had learned of the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma for a formal declaration of war, till he had finally persuaded himself to take action. Sloat occupied Monterey on July 7, and the following day Montgomery received orders to take possession of San Francisco Bay. The grizzly-bear flag was joyfully replaced by the stars and stripes, and the Californian Republic disappeared from history.

Commodore Stockton in the *Congress* reached Monterey on July 15, twenty-four hours before the arrival of the great ship-of-the-line *Collingwood*, flag-ship of the British Pacific squadron. Because of this coincidence, a legend soon sprang up about a "race" between Sloat and Stockton on one side and the British admiral on the other, for the possession of California. But nothing could have been less like a race than the slow and uncertain movements of all three of these commanders, and it would not have made the slightest difference to

California if the *Collingwood* had reached Monterey even before the *Congress* had cleared from Honolulu. Little as Great Britain liked to see Texas and California become American, its government liked still less the idea of another war with the United States. Lord Aberdeen, the premier, had said so very frankly to the Mexicans when they approached him with hopes of an alliance.*

Commodore Sloat, who was very old and infirm, now turned over his command to Stockton, at the latter's pointed suggestion, and went home, where he was severely reprimanded for his delay in taking possession of California. This task was rapidly and easily accomplished. General José Castro and Governor Pio Pico fled to Mexico, and every town in California was soon occupied by the Americans. Fremont was appointed by Stockton, first, to the command of a battalion of local volunteers, and, later, civil governor.

Despatches were sent off overland to Washington by the hand of the famous frontiersman, Kit Carson. But one hun-

* See Rives, chap. XXXI.

and twenty miles west of Santa Fé Carson was met by 300 United States dragoons under General Kearny. With this handful of regulars and 900 Missouri volunteers under Colonel Doniphan, Kearny had marched unresisted from Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fé, occupied that ancient city, and annexed all New Mexico to the United States (see page 139). Leaving Doniphan's volunteers behind, Kearny had pushed on with the cavalry till he met Carson and learned of the occupation of California. This induced him to send back two-thirds of his dragoons and proceed with the remaining hundred and a couple of light howitzers.

But the nineteen-hundred-mile march from Fort Leavenworth had been hard on horseflesh, and when Kearny's command reached California only the officers and twelve of the troopers still retained their horses. The rest were either mounted on mules or marched afoot with the guns and wagons. At San Pascual, thirty-eight miles from San Diego, they were attacked by 160 superbly mounted Mexican Californians, under Don Andres Pico, brother of the

governor. Repulsed by the American's fire, the Californians let the few American horsemen scatter in pursuit, then wheeled and lanced them at leisure before the dragoons on mules could come up. Twenty Americans were killed and 18 wounded, including Kearny himself, in this skirmish. To add to the Mexicans' triumph, the mules harnessed to one of the American howitzers stampeded and took the gun with them into the Californian lines.

In spite of his wounds, Kearny joined Stockton's marines, bluejackets, and volunteers at San Diego on December 12, and on the 20th the United States forces, 500 strong, started for Los Angeles, from which city the Americans had been driven by a revolt under the leadership of Don Andres Pico and Don Mariano Flores.

This revolt, which for the moment had regained for Mexico all southern California, was short-lived. Kearny and Stockton forced the passage of the San Gabriel River on January 8, 1847, defeated the insurgents on the plain of the Mesa next day, and made an unopposed entry into Los Angeles on the 10th. Flores and Pico, fleeing for their

lives, met Fremont and his battalion of mounted volunteers as they came up from Santa Barbara and with him signed a capitulation. The subsequent arrival of additional troops—a battalion of Mormon volunteers from Fort Leavenworth, and a battery of regular artillery (among whose officers was Lieutenant William Tecumseh Sherman), which with a regiment of New York volunteers had been sent round Cape Horn—put an end to Mexico's hopes of recovering her lost province of California.

Kearny, who was Fremont's superior officer, refused to recognize the latter as governor of California, which office Kearny now assumed himself. Fremont was ordered to report himself under arrest at Washington, where he was court-martialled and dismissed from the service, but pardoned and reinstated by President Polk. So greatly did Fremont strike the popular imagination that he was nominated for the presidency by the new Republican party in 1856, but his prestige waned rapidly in the Civil War. Yet, charlatan though he was in many ways, there are few more pic-

turesque and romantic figures in our history than this teacher of mathematics, the "Pathfinder," the "Gray Mustang," John Charles Fremont.

CHAPTER IX

MONTEREY AND BUENA VISTA

REFUSING to grant an armistice, Taylor crossed the Rio Grande on May 18 and occupied Matamoros, hastily evacuated by Arista, who retreated into the interior with all speed. Taylor's "Army of Occupation" was now an "Army of Invasion," with its headquarters on Mexican soil, but before it could advance any farther both men and supplies were needed.

The first eight regiments of volunteers, called for by Taylor himself from Louisiana and Texas, reported for duty before the middle of June, but they had been called out under the old militia law of 1795, for three months' service only. At the end of that time they all marched home again, except the two Texan cavalry regiments, which re-enlisted for twelve months or the war. Soon many more regiments of twelve-month volunteers poured into Matamoros, much sooner than Taylor could ob-

tain the tents, blankets, baggage-wagons, and the thousand and one other things needed by even the smallest army in a barren and hostile land. As in '61 and '98 there was great impatience on the part of the administration and public, who demanded an immediate advance, great difficulty on the part of the commanding generals in explaining why such an advance was not practicable, and great mortality among the raw recruits in the hot, unsanitary camps. Measles and typhoid killed many more American soldiers than did the Mexican bullets. To add to the army's discomfort, the rainy season, which had now begun, was the wettest that had been known for many years.

But though the camps were flooded, the Rio Grande was also, and that usually shallow stream was unexpectedly made navigable by steamboats. As soon as enough of these could be collected, the army was transported up-stream, and a new base established at Camargo for the advance on Monterey.

Taylor's army marched out of Camargo at the beginning of September 6,000 strong,

almost equally divided between regulars and volunteers. There were four field-batteries of regular artillery—Ridgely's, Bragg's, Duncan's, and Taylor's—and a battering-train of two twenty-four-pounders and a ten-inch mortar. The garrison of Monterey, commanded by General Ampudia, was about equal to the force that was marching to besiege it. Four thousand Mexican infantry and 2,000 lancers held the town with more than forty field-pieces, besides several heavy guns of position mounted on the fortifications.

The Monterey of 1846 was not the Americanized city of to-day, with its street-cars and factories and 100,000 inhabitants. It was a sleepy little Spanish-American town of 10,000 or 12,000 people, and narrow streets that ran at right angles to each other from the great plaza in front of the cathedral. Roughly rectangular in shape, with its long axis running east and west, Monterey lay on the north bank of the River of San Juan de Monterey, that flowed into the Rio Grande not far from Camargo. The plain on which the city stands is surrounded by high mountains on all sides

except the north. That approach was well guarded by the citadel—a square, bastioned fortification, called by the Americans "The Black Fort." To the west rose an isolated steep hill, the Loma de Independencia, crowned by the huge, unfinished Bishop's Palace, a thick-walled masonry building, easily converted into a fort. Beneath its guns the road to Saltillo left the western end of Monterey, turned southward across the river and passed between two hills, on each of which had been thrown up a one-gun battery, called respectively Fort Soldado and Fort Federacion. The eastern end of the city, where the river curved to the north, was protected by three redoubts, mounting three or four guns apiece, but open in the rear. Fort Libertad and Fort Diablo stood nearest the river in the order named. The most important of these three redoubts was the one at the northeast angle of the city, called Fort Teneria, from the brook that flowed past it from a tannery a few blocks within the town.

Taylor's army arrived and went into camp at the wood of San Domingo, or the "Walnut Springs," three miles northeast

of Monterey on September 19. Confident that the Mexicans would keep strictly on the defensive, Taylor did not hesitate to divide his own force. Worth's division of regulars, with a regiment of Texan cavalry, made a wide détour to the southwest, seized and held the road to Saltillo, stormed the two little batteries that had guarded it, and turned their guns on the Bishop's Palace. At three o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, the 22d, during a downpour of rain, six companies of regulars and 200 Texans captured a small earthwork at the extreme western end of the long crest of the Loma de Independencia, hauled up a twelve-pounder, and began firing it into the Bishop's Palace. Out swarmed the garrison, reinforced by troops from the city, but the Americans met their charge with so deadly a fire that the Mexicans fled back into the palace and out the other side with Worth's men after them. The detachment that had captured the forts across the river now recrossed in haste, Duncan's and Taylor's batteries galloped up, and the demoralized defenders were driven back into the city.

Hearing heavy firing at the other end of the town, Worth advanced next day down the two parallel streets that led from the Bishop's Palace to the Cathedral Plaza. Instead of storming the barricades they encountered at every corner, the Americans broke their way through the walls of the houses, as the Texans had done at San Antonio de Bexar. By nightfall Worth's men had reached and occupied a large building within one block of the plaza, and during Wednesday night they brought up and mounted three pieces of artillery on its roof. They were ready to open a most destructive fire when the white flag was displayed at dawn.

To create a diversion in Worth's favor, Taylor had ordered an assault on the eastern end of the city on Monday morning. The small American siege-battery, scantily supplied with ammunition, made little impression on the citadel, or "Black Fort," and when the First, Third, and Fourth Infantry under Twiggs attempted to storm the Teneria redoubt, they were raked by a flanking fire from the citadel, and repulsed with heavy loss. As the regulars fell back,

Quitman's brigade of volunteers, the First Tennessee and the Mississippi Rifles under Colonel Jefferson Davis dashed gallantly forward, drove back an attempted sortie by the Mexican lancers, swept over the walls of Fort Teneria and captured it, garrison and all. But Fort Diablo held out after three assaults, and at nightfall the Americans withdrew, leaving the First Kentucky to hold Fort Teneria.

Tuesday was passed in long-range bombardment. That night Ampudia ordered the evacuation of the two forts he still held at the eastern end of the city, and concentrated his men in the thick-walled houses and barricaded streets about the Cathedral Plaza. Quitman's brigade, supported by Garland's regulars, entered the eastern end of the city on Wednesday morning as Worth, hearing the heavy fire that greeted them, advanced from the west. Instead of fighting from house to house, Quitman's men fought their way doggedly up the open street, raked by grape-shot and swept by the fire of swarms of snipers on the sandbagged roofs.

"But on, still on our column kept
Through hissing sheets of fiery spray,
Where fell the dead the living stepped
Still storming on the guns that swept
The slippery streets of Monterey."

When they were within a block of the plaza the ammunition ran out, and Lieutenant U. S. Grant, of the Fourth Infantry, volunteered to ride back for more. Hanging over the side of his horse like an Indian, Grant galloped out of the city, with the Mexicans firing at him from every street corner. Instead of sending the ammunition, however, Taylor ordered Quitman to withdraw, and postponed the assault until next morning, pending a consultation with General Worth.

But on Thursday morning General Ampudia sent Taylor a white flag and offered to capitulate. Though he might well have insisted on an unconditional surrender, Taylor was satisfied with the evacuation of the city and citadel. Two days later Ampudia and his army marched out free men, with their small arms, one field-battery, and all the honors of war—bands playing, flags

flying, and the American soldiers looking on with great interest. There was to be an armistice for the next eight weeks, unless the truce were terminated sooner by the action of the government on either side.

The American Government was extremely displeased with Taylor for granting the armistice for which, however, he advanced military, humane, and political reasons. To have pressed the assault would have cost many more American lives—his army had already lost 120 killed and 350 wounded —and his small force could not have surrounded the city and prevented the escape of the garrison. Nor was he ready for an advance.

"In regard to the temporary cessation of hostilities, the fact that we are not at this moment (within eleven days of the termination of the period fixed by the convention) prepared to move forward in force, is a sufficient explanation of the military reasons which dictated this suspension of arms. It paralyzed the enemy during a period when, from the want of necessary means, we could not possibly move. . . .

"In the conference with General Ampudia

I was distinctly told by him that he had invited it to spare the further effusion of blood and because General Santa Anna had declared himself favorable to peace.

"The result of the entire operation has been to throw the Mexican army back more than three hundred miles to the city of San Luis Potosi, and to open the country to us, as far as we choose to penetrate it, up to the same point."*

Paredes was no longer President—he had been driven out by a revolution on August 4. A week later, General Santa Anna appeared off Vera Cruz on the British steamer *Arab*, and was permitted to pass through the United States fleet blockading the port because of his secret agreement with President Polk. Though he did not have himself "elected" President of Mexico until December, Santa Anna immediately obtained control of the government and prompted its refusal to discuss peace on any terms. For all his pacific promises that so completely gulled James K. Polk, Santa Anna knew his own countrymen too

* Taylor to Adjutant-General Jones, November 8, 1846. House Rep. Doc. 60, 30th Congress, 1st Session, 359.

well to imagine that any Mexican government could last for twenty-four hours after refusing to fight an invading enemy. And no other Mexican of the period was as capable as he in raising and organizing large armies in a short time.

As it permitted the return of Santa Anna to Mexico in 1846, so in 1898 the United States Government brought the exiled Aguinaldo from Hong-Kong to help drive the Spaniards out of the Philippines, and in 1914 did its utmost to aid Generals Carranza and Villa in getting rid of the obnoxious dictator Huerta. And in each of the first two cases, and possibly the third, our sincere desire for peace led us into making a present of their most efficient leader to our opponents in a long and difficult foreign war.

Before the Americans had fully realized that he was not "favorable to peace," Santa Anna was at San Luis Potosi drilling recruits and concentrating the garrisons from Monterey, Tampico, and all the smaller towns of northern Mexico into an army. Tampico had been taken without a fight by our naval forces in the middle of No-

vember, while Taylor had at the same time caused Saltillo to be occupied by General Worth, also without meeting any resistance.

General Wool, commanding the "Army of the Centre" of 2,400 men, had left San Antonio in September to march directly on the city of Chihuahua, while Taylor was advancing farther east. When Wool was halted by the armistice, he had got as far into Mexico as Monclova. There, on his own initiative, subsequently affirmed by Taylor's orders, Wool abandoned the advance on Chihuahua, turned toward Saltillo, and on December 5, after marching three hundred miles through Mexican territory without burning gunpowder, occupied Parras.

Even after this partial concentration, the few thousand American troops in northern Mexico were scattered over an irregular front of nearly five hundred miles, from Parras to Tampico, while swarms of guerillas harassed the plodding wagon-trains bringing supplies from the Rio Grande, and Santa Anna mustered his forces to the southward at San Luis Potosi.

Polk's administration realized the military weakness of this position, now that the cherished scheme of making peace through Santa Anna had failed. Peace must now be won by striking harder and swifter blows than was possible in northern Mexico—the harder and swifter the better, as the war was no longer popular in the United States. This was convincingly shown by the result of the congressional elections in November, which turned a large Democratic majority in the House of Representatives into a small majority of Whigs. To make matters worse, General Taylor, who was getting all the credit and military glory of the war, was himself an ardent Whig.

For all these reasons, Polk and his Cabinet decided to suspend operations in the north and adopt General Winfield Scott's plan of sending an expedition to Mexico City by way of Vera Cruz. General Scott was now placed in command of this expedition, and to strengthen his force he was given the flower of Taylor's army. All the regulars, except four field-batteries and two squadrons of dragoons under Lieutenant-

Colonel May (who had been promoted for his gallantry at Resaca de la Palma), and all the experienced volunteers, except Jefferson Davis's Mississippi Rifles, were detached from Taylor's command, while he was ordered to fall back from Saltillo and remain on the defensive in and about Monterey.

But Taylor, disregarding Scott's urgent advice to retreat, remained at Agua Nueva, eighteen miles south of Saltillo, drilling his new volunteers. And General Santa Anna, stung by the taunts of the Mexican newspapers about the inactivity of his army in its "Capua" of San Luis Potosi, suddenly started, on January 27, 1847, on the two-hundred-and-forty-mile march, the last stage of which ran through a waterless desert, to Saltillo. His lancers captured two unsuspecting detachments of Arkansas and Kentucky cavalry near Encarnacion, and it was not until the early hours of Sunday, February 21, that May's dragoons brought in the news that 2,000 Mexican lancers under General Miñon had turned Taylor's left and were swooping down on Saltillo from the east. At midday Major

McCulloch's Texas Rangers galloped in from the south to report that Santa Anna's main army, 20,000 strong, was advancing swiftly across the desert from Encarnacion.

Taylor fell back that afternoon twelve miles to Buena Vista. Yell's Arkansas Cavalry, left as a rear-guard to cover the removal of stores, set fire to everything that was left and galloped off with what wagons they had had time to load as Santa Anna's vanguard dashed into the blazing town at midnight.

Ordering General Miñon to fall on the Americans' rear, Santa Anna pressed on with all speed. Though his infantrymen were dropping with fatigue and tortured by thirst after their forced march across the desert, their commander gave them no rest nor even a chance to fill their empty canteens, but urged them on remorselessly at the double-quick in the dust of the mounted advance-guard, while behind the artillery drivers flogged their weary mules. Well informed as to the smallness of Taylor's army, Santa Anna mistook his opponent's sudden but orderly retreat for a demoralized rout. He was astounded to find the Amer-

icans calmly awaiting him at "the gorge of Buena Vista, which no one could pass, with any military eye, without selecting it as an admirable defensive point."*

The ranch and hamlet of Buena Vista, so called from the "beautiful view" it commanded, was situated three miles south of Saltillo in the centre of a long barren valley that runs almost due north and south and varies from a mile and a half to two miles in width. The road from San Luis Potosi ran up the west side of this valley, hugging the bed of a stream that was then, in February and at the height of the dry season, a mere dusty *arroyo*. In the rainy season the heavy drainage down the slope from the hills on the east side of the valley cut many steep-banked *barrancas*, or gullies, sloping from east to west and breaking up the ground into irregular plateaus of varying size. On the edge of the largest of these plateaus Taylor formed his line across the valley. His left flank, resting on the eastern hills, was weak, but his right was very strong. The key of his position was the deep, narrow gulch or pass where river and

* Benham, "Recollections of Buena Vista," p. 9.

road ran between the western cliffs and the edge of the plateau; and this point, called by the Mexicans "La Angostura," or "The Narrows," was held by a battery under Captain Washington, well supported by "horse, foot, and dragoons."

Santa Anna sent a white flag at noon on the 22d to demand General Taylor's surrender, which was curtly refused. There was some long-range cannonading and skirmishing that afternoon, but the real attack began at dawn on the 23d.

Santa Anna sent forward his infantry in three heavy columns, each supported by cavalry, while he himself remained in the rear in command of a strong reserve. The first Mexican column, advancing in close formation against the American right, was crumpled up by a storm of grape-shot from Washington's battery on the road, forced to seek shelter in the mouths of the nearest ravines and disposed of for the rest of the day. But the second column, advancing diagonally up one of the ravines, and the third column of light troops under Ampudia, keeping to the upper slope of the eastern hills, together struck the weak left of the

American line. Here three field-pieces, supported by the Second Indiana, a raw volunteer regiment that had never before been under fire, held their ground against overwhelming odds for half an hour. But at the end of that time every man and horse attached to one of the guns had been shot down, and the other two pieces were limbered up and withdrawn. An orderly retreat before superior numbers was too much for the untrained Second Indiana, which broke and fled to the rear in utter rout as the exultant Mexicans poured through the break in the American line.

But the centre held fast, and from the right, where the assaulting column had been repulsed, came Bragg's battery and the Second Kentucky to reinforce the left. The Arkansas and Kentucky cavalry hurled themselves on the second Mexican column, and though driven back with heavy loss checked it for many valuable minutes. Ampudia's men, driving the American skirmishers before them, had advanced far up the valley and completely turned the American left flank.

Taylor himself now galloped up from

Saltillo with two troops of dragoons, and followed by the Mississippi Rifles. That regiment, joined by the Third Indiana that was no longer needed to support Washington's battery on the right, received the Mexican advance with the utmost steadiness and a deadly fire that drove in the heads of both columns. The Mexican cavalry circled round the American infantry and became engaged with a mixed force of May's dragoons and Kentucky and Arkansas volunteers, who succeeded in driving them away from Buena Vista. Both that ranch and the town of Saltillo were filled with stragglers from the battlefield who had stopped their flight and joined the teamsters and camp-guards in defending the buildings and wagon-trains against the recurring attacks of the Mexican cavalry.

The retreat had now stopped after the American army had been bent back into a letter L, reversed, with the long limb running north and south at right angles to the original line, and facing the Mexican cavalry and infantry who thronged the east side of the valley above the heads of the

After the drawing by C. Nebel.

The Battle of Buena Vista.

ravines. For two hours or more both sides pounded steadily at each other with cannon and musketry, till the Mexican right and centre began to fall back under our artillery fire. A second mass of lancers charged down the slope and threatened to overwhelm the handful of American cavalry at Buena Vista till Reynolds's battery came to their aid with grape-shot. Lancers, dragoons, and mounted volunteers, thrusting and hacking in tangled conflict, swept through the hamlet of Buena Vista and out on the plain to the west, where the Mexicans galloped off round the entire American army and rejoined Santa Anna.

The third charge of the Mexican lancers was directed at the First Mississippi. This regiment had been retained by Taylor not only because its colonel, Jefferson Davis, was the general's son-in-law, but because Davis was a West Pointer, who had brought his command to a high state of drill and efficiency. Armed with percussion-lock Whitney rifles, that far outranged their opponents' flintlocks, the Mississippians had caused the dense masses of Mexican infantry to suffer heavily, but the riflemen

had no bayonets with which to resist a charge of cavalry. Forming his regiment into a re-entrant angle, or letter V, with the open end toward the lancers and across the ravine down which they were advancing rapidly in column of fours, Davis had his men hold their fire till the foremost troopers were nearly upon them, when one terrible volley emptied scores of Mexican saddles and sent the surviving lancers back even faster than they had come.

Hard pressed by the now advancing and exultant American infantry, penned in against the eastern side of the valley, and in imminent danger of capture, the Mexican left wing raised the white flag. Deceived by this, the Americans halted and ceased firing long enough for the Mexicans to extricate themselves and escape by the way they had come, after which they promptly resumed the fight.

Realizing that the critical moment of the battle had come, Santa Anna hurled his entire reserve against the angle of the American line. There Lieutenant O'Brien, of the Fourth Artillery, fought his two field-pieces till they were captured, deliberately

sacrificing his guns to save time for Taylor to bring up reinforcements. Outnumbered and shot to pieces, the Second Kentucky and Second Illinois were being driven back down the nearest ravine, and the gap in the American line was wide and ominous.

"Speed, speed, artillery, to the front, where the hurricane of fire
Crushes those noble regiments, reluctant to retire!
Speed swiftly! Gallop! Ah, they come! Again Bragg climbs the ridge
And his grape sweeps down the swarming foe as a strong man moweth sedge."*

"A little more grape, Captain Bragg," said General Taylor coolly, a command that struck the popular imagination and was echoed throughout the United States in the next presidential campaign.† The Mississippi Rifles and Third Indiana came up at the double as the Mexicans fell back. Nightfall found both armies back in their original positions.

So ended the battle of Buena Vista, the

* Albert Pike, "Battle of Buena Vista."

† Or "as Bragg told me, unluckily for the poetry of the story, 'Give 'em hell, Bragg!'" Benham, p. 23.

hardest-fought action of the war. Both sides claimed the victory, and when he returned to Mexico City Santa Anna made a great show of the prisoners taken at Encarnacion and the captured American guns. But during the night after the battle, while Taylor was making ready for another day of fighting, Santa Anna abandoned his wounded and retreated as hastily as he had advanced. Hundreds of his disheartened and exhausted soldiers died and thousands deserted during the terrible march across the waterless waste, and Santa Anna brought back to San Luis Potosi less than half of the 20,000 he had led out so confidently to the north.

Taylor's army had gone into action 4,754 strong, and had lost 746 officers and men killed, wounded, or missing. Counting Miñon's cavalry, which had remained near Saltillo picking up stragglers and waiting for the Americans to retreat, Santa Anna had had at least 16,000 or 17,000 effectives within striking distance on the day of the battle. Had General Miñon chosen to disregard the strict letter of his orders and hurled his 2,000 lancers on the Ameri-

can rear, the story of Buena Vista might well have been written differently.

The battle of Buena Vista put an end to the fighting in northern Mexico, made Jefferson Davis the hero of the South, and Zachary Taylor the next President of the United States.

CHAPTER X

NEW MEXICO AND CHIHUAHUA

"O'er the bitter and beautiful desert, in the dust and heat and haze,
Through mornings of ruby and topaz and evenings of chrysoprase,
The golden noon of a pitiless June and the heat of a fierce July,
We tramped and limped till the August flame lit up the merciless sky,
All the thirsty way to Santa Fé, and there, without a blow,
We took in a day to keep for ay the land of New Mexico."

—Cuyler Van Slycke.

"THE land of New Mexico" had been formally taken possession of in the name of the King of Spain by Don Juan de Oñate, on April 30, 1598. The Spaniards established missions among the Pueblo Indians and maintained a small garrison in Santa Fé. Except for the great Indian uprising at the end of the seventeenth century, the life of New Mexico was placid

and uneventful, even during the Mexican War of Independence. After 1821 there was a constantly increasing trade over the old Sante Fé trail to and from St. Louis. The abortive Texan expedition against New Mexico in 1841 failed without firing a shot (see page 53), where five years later the United States forces, with an equal lack of bloodshed, succeeded.

At the outbreak of the First Mexican War, Colonel Philip Kearny, of the First Dragoons, was at Fort Leavenworth, in what is now the State of Kansas, with six troops of his regiment, 300 strong. Polk made Kearny a brigadier-general, in command of the "Army of the West," consisting of his own regulars, the First Missouri Mounted Volunteers under Colonel Doniphan, two batteries and two infantry companies, also of volunteers—a total force of 1,700 men and 16 guns. Over 1,500 wagons, 3,500 mules, and nearly 15,000 oxen were needed for the transport and subsistence of even this little army on its desert march.

Leaving Fort Leavenworth late in June, Kearny's men swung down the Santa Fé

trail at an average pace of nearly twenty miles a day. They crossed into Mexican territory at the trading-post of Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River, on August 2, and ten days later the Army of the West made its unopposed entry into Santa Fé. Armijo, the Mexican governor, who had assembled a force at Apache Cañon, lost heart as the Americans approached and fled into Mexico.

An officer of Kearny's dragoons made the following professional comment on this expedition:

"The 'Army of the West' marched from Bent's Fort with only rations calculated to last, by uninterrupted and most rapid marches, until it should arrive at Santa Fé. Is this War? Tested by the rules of the science, this expedition is anomalous, not to say quixotic. A colonel's command, called an army, marches eight hundred miles beyond its base, its communications liable to be cut off by the slightest effort of the enemy—mostly through a desert—the whole distance almost totally destitute of resources, to conquer a territory of two hundred and

fifty thousand square miles. . . . This is the art of war as practised in America." *

Hoisting the stars and stripes over the old adobe "palace" of the Spanish governors, General Kearny formally annexed "The Territory of New Mexico in the United States," had an "Organic Law" for its government struck off on an antiquated Spanish printing-press, and, in September, departed with his dragoons for California, leaving Doniphan in possession of Santa Fé.

The Second Missouri Volunteers arrived presently under Colonel Sterling Price, who was made civil governor of New Mexico. Early in 1847 there was a formidable uprising of Indians and Mexicans, promptly and vigorously put down by Price. Within a fortnight and with less than 400 men, he defeated the insurgents at La Cañada, where Price was wounded, and at El Embrido, stormed their fortified position at Taos and forced them to surrender their leaders, whom he tried and hanged. From that day to this, there has

* Cooke's "Conquest of New Mexico and California."

been no more loyal and patriotic part of the United States than New Mexico.

In the meanwhile, from September to December, 1846, Doniphan had gone by General Kearny's orders into the country of the Navajo and Zuñi Indians, where he had shown great firmness and diplomacy in making these tribes stop fighting with each other and raiding into New Mexico, as they had done for centuries, release the prisoners and property they had taken from the whites, and enter into a treaty with the United States.

This done, Doniphan's orders read that he was to "proceed to report with his regiment to Brigadier-General Wool," who was supposed to be at, or approaching, the city of Chihuahua, five hundred and fifty miles distant through the enemy's country.

Doniphan rode out of Santa Fé on December 14, 1846, at the head of 856 mounted riflemen, followed by a long train of canvas-topped wagons. Suffering terribly from cold and thirst on the ninety-mile stretch through the desert of the Jornada del Muerto, the advance-guard, 500 strong,

reached Brazito, or the "Little Arm" of the Rio Grande, about twenty-five miles from El Paso, now called Ciudad Juarez. (The present city of El Paso on the American side of the river was not then in existence.)

Christmas Day found the 500 Missourians taking life very easy at Brazito. The men were scattered far and near, looking for forage and fire-wood, while Doniphan and his officers were playing a game of "three-trick loo" for a fine Mexican horse they had captured that morning, when a cloud of dust betrayed the approach of a Mexican army.

"Then we must stop the game long enough to whip the Mexicans," said Doniphan, laying down his cards. "But remember that I am away ahead in the score and cannot be beaten, and we'll play it out as soon as the battle is over."

But in the confusion of the fight, the horse was lost, and the game was never finished.*

The Mexicans advanced 1,300 strong, 500 regular dragoons from Vera Cruz

* Connelley's "Doniphan's Expedition," p. 371.

and 800 volunteers, both horse and foot, from El Paso and Chihuahua with a howitzer. Outflanking the Americans at both ends of the line, the Mexicans sent forward an officer carrying a black flag inscribed "Libertad ó Muerto," and painted pirate-wise with a skull and cross-bones, who announced that no quarter would be given.

The fight began with a charge against the American left of the Vera Cruz dragoons, in all their glory of "blue pantaloons, green coats trimmed with scarlet, and tall caps plated in front with brass, on the top of which fantastically waved a plume of horsehair or buffalo's tail." * But these gorgeous horsemen could not face the heavy rifle-fire, and 17 mounted Missourians chased them ignominiously from the field. The Chihuahua militia attacked the American right, which lay down and waited till the Mexicans were within sixty paces, then poured in a single volley that sent the survivors flying. Forty-three Mexicans were killed, 150 wounded, and 5 prisoners and the howitzer were captured

* Hughes's "Doniphan's March," p. 370.

in this skirmish, in which only 7 Americans were injured.

El Paso was occupied three days later, and Doniphan remained there for six weeks, till his artillery came up. The Missourians marched out of El Paso on February 8, 1847, 924 strong, with a six-gun battery and their own wagon-train, besides 315 other wagons belonging to American traders wishing to do business in Chihuahua. For twenty days this caravan-army continued its way unopposed, now crossing deserts where the troopers held their swords in their hands, that they might carry water in the scabbards, now fighting a prairie fire by cutting down the tall grass from around the camp with their sabres.

Unaided by their national government, the citizens of Chihuahua had succeeded in raising and equipping an army of their own of at least 2,000 men. "It was a division small indeed in numbers, but perfectly well armed. . . . The good Chihuahuans looked with pride upon the result of their labors, and in every piece of artillery, every musket, in every object which presented itself to their sight, they recog-

nized the fruit of their personal exertions. . . . All had been created by them, all was new, all was brilliant. . . . The enemy were to appear on the following day, according to the news received of their approach, and that night was a festival in the camp. In every tent, in every family group, cheerful toasts were drunk to the liberty of the fatherland, the young men abandoning themselves to the illusive delirium of expected triumph, and thinking more of their expedition to New Mexico to assist their brethren to cast off the American yoke than of the approaching encounter, which they looked upon as less important than it was." *

Eighteen miles north of Chihuahua town the road from El Paso ran over the lowest and narrowest part of a dumb-bell-shaped ridge, beyond which lay the dry bed of the Rio Sacramento. There the Mexicans lined the east side of the pass with tier above tier of batteries and intrenchments, apparently expecting that the Americans would file tamely into the gulch to be shot down. But Doniphan knew a trick worth two of that.

* "Noticias por la Guerra," pp. 168–173.

Except for the 200 horsemen riding in advance, nothing was to be seen of the American army as it approached but wagons —a great wagon-train nearly a quarter of a mile long and five vehicles abreast. Hidden in the centre, with two "prairie-schooners" on either side of each gun, trundled the field-battery, while between the outer files of wagons rode the mounted infantry. Instead of entering the pass, the column swung to the right and trotted to the western end of the ridge, where a steep but practicable slope led to the plateau above. Up this slope dashed the American battery, and went into action on the plateau, supported by the 200 cavalrymen, while the mounted infantry left their horses and deployed to left and right of the guns. The horses and wagons were left in the rear, guarded by two companies of armed teamsters.

A thousand Mexican lancers with four guns dashed forward along the top of the plateau, but recoiled before the deadly fire poured into them, and retreated behind the intrenchments in great disorder. At this the exultant Missourians, horse, foot, and

guns, charged irresistibly across the deep ravine and over the Mexican lines. The Chihuahuan amateur soldiery, firing excitedly from the hip, were shot or knocked on the head by hundreds, their sixteen cannon, their entire camp equipment, and even the saddle-mules and carriages of the prominent citizens who had ridden out to watch the repulse of the invaders, all fell into the hands of the Americans—only 1 of whom had been killed and 8 wounded.

Doniphan took peaceful possession of Chihuahua on the following day, March 1, and released a number of American citizens found in prison there. The American traders who had accompanied the army now unpacked their wagons and opened a fair. After occupying the city for two months, Doniphan got in touch with General Wool at Saltillo, more than six hundred miles away, and presently joined him there, after a rapid and unresisted march through the states of Durango and Coahuila. The First Missouri Mounted Volunteers were reviewed on the battle-field of Buena Vista by General Wool on May 22, and then, as their year of service was nearly expired,

they were sent from Saltillo to the mouth of the Rio Grande and thence by sea to New Orleans and up the Mississippi to their homes.

Doniphan's march was enthusiastically likened by William Cullen Bryant to Xenophon's Anabasis. The 10,000 Greeks had marched through 3,450 miles of hostile country in fifteen months; the 1,000 Missourians had covered 3,500 miles in thirteen months by land, besides 2,500 miles by water. Each had demonstrated the weakness of the country they had marched through so easily, and the apathy of its population. Like the Persian peasantry, the great bulk of the Mexican people were weary of wars and cared little who ruled them. After the organized Mexican forces were defeated and dispersed, there was very little of the guerilla warfare that had been so much dreaded by the Americans when hostilities began.

CHAPTER XI

VERA CRUZ AND CERRO GORDO

WINFIELD SCOTT and Zachary Taylor were both natives of northern Virginia, brave and efficient general officers in the United States army, and Whigs; but there the resemblance ceased. Scott was a college graduate, a polished and widely travelled man of the world, and military pomp and circumstance were as dear to him as they were hateful to "Old Rough and Ready." As huge and handsome as Porthos, Scott took the same childish delight in dressing himself up in the fullest of full-dress uniforms as did that immortal musketeer. But for all his vanity and his ludicrous lack of a sense of humor that set the entire country to chuckling over his famous "hasty plate of soup," Scott was a master of his profession. In the War of 1812 he had organized the best-drilled body of troops on our side of the Niagara frontier and led them to victory at

the battle of Chippewa, and had had his left shoulder "pierced by a British musket-ball" at Lundy's Lane. Brave though he was on the battle-field, Scott was even better at planning a siege or a campaign, and he spent many weary weeks perfecting the details of the descent on Vera Cruz.

Twelve thousand regulars and volunteers, drawn from Taylor's army or sent from various Gulf and Atlantic ports, were gradually assembled at Lobos Island, a good harbor long used by English smugglers, within three days' sail of Vera Cruz. The great fleet of white-sailed transports appeared off the city on March 5, and were piloted by officers of the blockading squadron to the anchorage of Anton Lizardo, twelve miles down the coast. Nearer the city and only a mile offshore lies the desolate island of Sacrificios, so called because Juan de Grijalva found traces of human sacrifice there in 1518. The beach opposite this island was the place Scott picked to land his men.

As there was not enough room between Sacrificios and the shore for all the transports, the troops were transferred to the

decks of the war-ships, at the anchorage off Anton Lizardo, from dawn to noon on the 9th of March, 1847. The squadron then crossed over and anchored off the landing-place. Worth's division of regulars, 4,500 strong, with two field-batteries and a detachment of marines, embarked in sixty-five large whale-boats that had been specially built for this purpose by Scott's orders, and were manned by naval bluejackets. Forming in line of battle, with the regimental colors flying in the brilliant sunlight from the leading boat of each regiment, the bands playing and the soldiers and seamen cheering from the fleet, the whale-boats dashed for the shore, while the distant guns roared harmlessly from the city wall, and the "mosquito flotilla" shelled the sand-hills beyond the beach, where Scott fully expected to find Santa Anna and his entire army lurking in ambush.

"On coming to within a hundred yards of the shore, the boats grounded on a small sand-bar. The officers and men immediately leaped into the water, the latter carrying their muskets on their shoulders

After the drawing by C. Nebel.

The Bombardment of Vera Cruz.

and holding their cartridge-boxes well up, as the water reached to their hips when wading ashore. As the boats successively arrived the men were formed on the beach, the boats making all expedition back to the vessels for more men. All of the first party having formed into line, several regimental colors were displayed, and a charge made to the heights in front, but not a single Mexican was to be seen. The American flag was immediately planted amidst loud and prolonged cheers, which were enthusiastically echoed by the troops on board." *

This was at sunset; by ten o'clock that night 10,000 men, with two field-batteries and two days' rations for all, had been placed safely on shore, within the space of four hours, without any mishap or the loss of a single life. Scott's elaborate plans, aided by the cordial co-operation of the navy, had worked out perfectly. Additional men, horses, and supplies were landed on the same spot thereafter, as fast as the weather allowed.

Worth's division, followed by Patter-

* Ballentine, p. 299.

son's volunteers and a second division of regulars under Twiggs, marched into position and went into camp, together forming a solid semicircle that completely invested the landward side of Vera Cruz. The fortifications before them, "consisted of a series of small bastions and redans, solidly built and capable of mounting from eight to ten guns each. The curtains by which they were connected consisted of a thin wall, proof only against musketry and of but little use. None of the defenses were protected by ditches, as the shifting sands which surrounded the city on all sides would have filled any ditch in the event of a heavy gale." *

Trenches were dug and four batteries established, under the direction of Colonel Totten of the engineering corps, who two years later was to begin the construction of the Panama Railroad. The first shovelful of earth was dug by Captain Robert Anderson, afterward commander of Fort Sumter. A formal demand for the surrender of the city and castle having been made on March 22, and refused by the

* Rives, II, 384.

commander, General Juan Morales, Scott decided to conduct a regular siege, beginning with a bombardment.

But the army's siege-train was still at sea, and though the light field-pieces and mortars that were brought to bear dropped shells in every part of the city and caused intense suffering among the peaceful inhabitants, the walls were not breached and the garrison, sheltered in their casemates, were undismayed. Three eight-inch Paixhan guns, firing sixty-eight pound shells, and three long thirty-two-pounders were accordingly brought ashore from the steam-frigate *Mississippi*. Dragged for a mile through loose sand, set up and served by successive details of seamen, this naval battery soon silenced or smashed everything before it. Except for this landing party and a brief bombardment of the Castle of San Juan de Ulloa by the two tiny steamers and four schooners of the "mosquito flotilla," the navy took no active part in the siege of Vera Cruz. The sturdy frigates and steamers of the blockading fleet, some of which afterward fought their way up the Mississippi

under Farragut, were kept carefully out of range of the one hundred and thirty-five guns of San Juan de Ulloa, which was then considered capable of sinking the entire American navy. For precisely opposite reasons, not a shot was fired at the ancient fortress prison by our battleships when the United States forces took Vera Cruz for the second time, in 1914, San Juan de Ulloa being then too weak, as it had once been too strong, to attack.

At the end of four days' bombardment the walls were breached and plans made for an assault, when General Landero, the new commander of the city, made overtures for surrender. (Morales, who had turned over the command to his subordinate when he saw further resistance was hopeless, succeeded in making his escape in a small boat.)

Terms were quickly agreed on and the garrison marched out with all the honors of war, stacked and surrendered their arms, and departed into the interior, on parole not to serve again in the war until duly exchanged. The citizens of Vera Cruz were guaranteed protection of their

property and freedom of religious worship. Scott's army made its formal entry into the city on the following day, March 29; the port was immediately reopened, and a period of great activity and prosperity began.

The defense of Vera Cruz was marked by the same inept passivity as that of Monterey. The large force of Mexican lancers in the neighborhood made only two attempts to molest the besieging army, and were each time easily driven off by the regular dragoons and volunteer cavalry.

The loss of life on both sides—19 Americans and about 400 Mexicans, during the siege of Vera Cruz in 1847—was almost exactly duplicated at the second taking of the city by the Americans, sixty-seven years later. But while Funston's brigade could live for seven months in Vera Cruz at the hottest season of the year, without endangering their health and efficiency, Scott had to hurry his army away from the coast and into the interior, or see his men perish of yellow fever. Though the raging "northers" swept day after day

into the open roadstead, swamping the whale-boats and wrecking transports and store-ships, the work of unloading went on apace, for far more terrible than the northers, whose season was now nearly at its end, was the yellow fever that invariably appeared as soon as they ceased to blow.

Enough mules, wagons, and supplies were at last landed to permit General Twiggs to march out at the head of his division of regulars on April 8, followed next day by General Patterson with two of his three brigades of volunteers. Having crossed the Tierra Caliente or "Hot Country" of the coastal plain in three days' forced march, Twiggs reached the beginning of the rise to the central plateau at Plan del Rio, and came in touch there with the cavalry outposts of a Mexican army under Santa Anna.

After the *débâcle* of the Buena Vista campaign, Santa Anna had succeeded in organizing a force of 5,650 men out of the wreckage of his army at San Luis Potosi. He had then hastened back to Mexico City, which was in a state of civil war

over the attempt of Farias, the liberal and anti-clerical vice-president, to force the Catholic Church to contribute some of its immense wealth to the defense of the country. Throughout the war the church behaved in the most selfish and unpatriotic manner, but Santa Anna dared not antagonize its mighty power. Instead, he had his congress repeal Farias's law for the secularization of part of the church property, and pass an act that in effect deposed the vice-president from office. Having settled these political difficulties, Santa Anna left the capital on April 2, to meet the invading army under Scott.

The defile at La Joya, about ten miles west of the city of Jalapa, was where Santa Anna first intended to make his stand, but he soon abandoned it in favor of the pass of Cerro Gordo, thirty miles nearer the coast, and not far from Plan del Rio.

At Plan del Rio the road from Vera Cruz crossed a stone bridge over the swift-running Rio del Plan, curved in a big semicircle through broken and hilly country, and came back to the river at Cerro Gordo. There the road ran through a narrow pass,

with the river flowing through a deep, steep-walled ravine on the left, and on the right the cone-shaped height of Cerro Gordo, which dominated all the surrounding country. On top of this hill, Santa Anna placed a six-gun battery in front of and at the centre of his line, which extended through the pass with its rear resting on the unfordable river, and its right wing protected by powerful batteries that swept the road and the ground between it and the river as the highway approached the pass from Plan del Rio. Santa Anna, who should have known the ground well, as Cerro Gordo lay between his two country estates of El Encerro and Manga de Clavo, declared that no other line of attack was possible, and that the hills in front of his centre and left wing were so rough that not even a rabbit could get through them. He also refused to fortify the Atalaya Hill* that stood close to Cerro Gordo on the side away from the river, but was lower than the latter. He confidently expected

*This is the hill usually referred to in American histories as "El Telegrafo," but that name was given by the Mexicans to Cerro Gordo itself, from the semaphore that had formerly stood there.

that the Americans would run their heads against his almost impregnable right wing.

General Twiggs, after reconnoitring for two days, prepared to make a direct frontal attack with his division alone, but fortunately General Patterson, his superior in rank, came up in time to countermand it and order a halt till the arrival of General Scott. A careful reconnoissance was then made by two young officers of the engineering corps, Lieutenant Beauregard and Captain Robert E. Lee, who presently found a way through the "rabbit-proof country," whereby the Mexican position could be turned.

Twiggs's division of regulars and Shields's brigade of volunteers marched out accordingly before daybreak on Sunday, April 18, "over chasms where the walls were so steep the men could barely climb them. . . . The engineers, who had directed the opening, led the way and the troops followed. Artillery was let down the steep slopes by hand, the men engaged attaching a strong rope to the rear axle and letting the guns down a piece at a time, while the men at the rope kept their ground at the top,

paying out gradually, while a few at the front directed the course of the piece. In like manner the guns were drawn up by hand the opposite slopes."*

Atalaya Hill was reached and stormed at two o'clock in the afternoon, the Americans driving the Mexican outpost from the crest with small loss, but suffering severely as they pursued the fugitives down the farther slope, swept by the battery on Cerro Gordo. The column halted for the rest of that day and the following night, when Captain Lee directed the bringing up and placing of a twenty-four pound gun and two howitzers, with great labor and under cover of darkness, on the summit of Atalaya. At the same time an eight-inch howitzer was being mounted by Scott's direction on the heights across the river. At the sound of Twiggs's guns on Atalaya at dawn Pillow's brigade of volunteers were to make a direct frontal attack on the strong batteries on the Mexican right, and clear the pass for the cavalry and field-battery that were to dash forward in pursuit as soon as the Mexicans began their retreat.

* Grant, "Memoirs," I, 132.

At the break of day a picked brigade of Twiggs's regulars, with shells and "war rockets" screaming over their heads from the battery on the crest, dashed down the slope of Atalaya Hill, up Cerro Gordo, and over the Mexican breastworks. As the defenders broke and fled, the Americans turned their own guns on them and the troops drawn up in the pass below. At the same time Shields's brigade of volunteers charged the extreme Mexican left. There Santa Anna and all his cavalry were stationed with a battery, but rather than be captured or driven into the river, they left the guns and fled up the road to Jalapa.

Pillow's brigade, guided by Lieutenant George B. McClellan of the engineers, had dashed gallantly forward against the batteries on the Mexican right, but the volunteers encountered such difficult ground and so deadly a fire that they fell back with considerable loss, General Pillow himself being badly wounded. But when the force holding those batteries realized that Twiggs had seized the pass in their rear and cut off their retreat, they hoisted the white flag and surrendered. Twiggs then started

up the road in pursuit of the others, as did the cavalry and field-battery detailed for the purpose as soon as the road was cleared. But Santa Anna had had too long a start.

All that had escaped of the Mexican army was widely dispersed and utterly demoralized. Its artillery, ammunition, camp, and entire equipment had fallen into the hands of the Americans, and 3,000 officers and men, including 5 generals, were prisoners of war. Like the garrison of Vera Cruz, these prisoners were released on parole, because of the difficulty of guarding them and also because Scott expected that such leniency would "diminish the resistance of other garrisons in our march."

"I am also somewhat embarrassed," said Scott, in his report to the Secretary of War, "with the pieces of artillery—all bronze—that we have captured. It would take a brigade and half the mules of this army to transport them fifty miles. A field-battery I shall take for service with the army, but the heavy metal must be collected and left here for the present. We have our own siege-train, and the proper carriages with us."

After the drawing by C. Nebel.

The Battle of Cerro Gordo.

Counting Worth's division, which did not get into the fight, there had been about 9,000 Americans to drive 8,000 Mexicans out of Cerro Gordo. How many of Santa Anna's men were killed and wounded can only be conjectured; Scott's army lost 263 killed and 368 wounded.

Jalapa was occupied without resistance the day after the battle. From there Scott sent forward Worth with his division of regulars and three volunteer regiments under Quitman. Leaving one of the latter to garrison the Castle of Perote, a famous old Spanish fortress that he found abandoned on April 22, Worth pushed on over the mountains, easily brushed aside 2,000 or 3,000 Mexican cavalrymen under Santa Anna at Amazoc on May 15, and three days later made a triumphant and unresisted entry into Puebla, the second city of the Mexican Republic.

"The singular appearance of some of the soldiers," says a Mexican historian, "their wagons, their artillery, their large horses, all attracted the curiosity of the multitude, and at the corners and squares an immense crowd surrounded the new *Conquistadores*.

The latter, extremely fatigued, confiding in the mutual guarantees exchanged between the city government and General Worth, or perhaps despising a people who so easily permitted the occupation of their territory, stacked arms and bivouacked in the plaza. . . . There is no doubt that more than 10,000 persons were gathered in the plaza and the surrounding streets. One cry, one effort, the heart of one determined man would have sufficed. If once this multitude had pressed in upon the enemy they would inevitably have perished. Nothing was done. . . ."*

* "Noticias," p. 227.

CHAPTER XII

FROM PUEBLA TO CHURUBUSCO

NEGOTIATIONS for peace kept the American army from advancing beyond Puebla for nearly three months after Worth's bivouac in the plaza. Hoping that the recent victories would induce the Mexicans to treat for the conclusion of the war that threatened his own political destruction, Polk sent Mr. Nicholas Trist, chief clerk of the State Department, as a special commissioner to abide at Scott's headquarters with authority to make and sign a treaty with Santa Anna's government.

Though he immediately got into a furious quarrel with Scott, who had diplomatic ambitions of his own and was enraged at the thought of yielding up any of his authority to a civilian, Trist soon made a firm friend of the general, and got in touch with the Mexican Government through the medium of the British minister. But neither Santa

Anna nor his congress dared incur the wrath of the Mexican people by surrendering New Mexico and California as the price of peace. If they did so, a domestic revolution was certain, while the repulse of Scott's army was possible, particularly as the delay had given the Mexicans time to organize the defense of their capital.

But the delay had also helped the invaders. All seven of Scott's volunteer regiments had been sent home in June at the expiration of their year's enlistment, and it took time to replace them with volunteers of a later levy. Ten new regiments of infantry had been added to the regular army for the rest of the war, and these were sent south as fast as they could be raised and organized. Yellow fever raged at Vera Cruz, and though the arriving troops were marched as fast as possible into the cool and healthy hill-country, yet there were more than 3,000 sick in the various hospitals by the end of June. Even worse than "Yellow Jack" was dysentery, caused by "excessive indulgence in fruits, which it was found impossible to keep from the troops." But the general health of the

army, in the delightful climate of Puebla, was excellent. Between drills the soldiers mingled amicably with the townspeople, who even to-day remember the army that actually paid cash for supplies instead of seizing them.

Yet, in spite of this liberal policy, Scott wrote to the Secretary of War:

"Our difficulties lie in gathering subsistence from a country covered with exasperated guerillas and banditti, and maintaining with inadequate garrisons and escorts communications with the rear."

For the latter reason, though he himself had not feared to ride from Jalapa to Puebla far in advance of the main body of his army and with an escort of only 250 dragoons, Scott decided to cut the long cord that bound him to his base at Vera Cruz and advance like Cortez after burning his ships. When the news of this decision reached London, the aged Duke of Wellington, who had been following the campaign with great interest, shook his head gravely and gave Scott up for lost.

Leaving a garrison of 393 Pennsylvania volunteers under Colonel Childs of the

regular army to guard the 1,800 American sick in the hospitals and hold a city of 80,000 Mexicans, Scott led out his army on August 7 on the road to the city of Mexico. He had in all 10,738 officers and men, organized in four divisions of infantry, commanded respectively by Generals Worth, Twiggs, Pillow, and Quitman, and an independent brigade of dragoons under Colonel Harney. With this force, Scott confidently advanced to attack a city of 200,000 inhabitants, defended by an army that was twice, and that he supposed to be fully three times, as numerous as his own.

Marching unresisted through deep defiles where 100 men could have stopped an army, the long blue columns climbed higher and higher till they passed the great snow-covered peak of Iztaccihuatl, and came, on the morning of the third day, to the summit of the pass, more than ten thousand feet above the level of the sea. Before and below them lay the valley of Mexico, beyond a semicircular chain of lakes lay the capital city.

"The direct road from Puebla, winding down from the mountain heights near the

conspicuous and snow-covered mass of Iztaccihuatl, passed along the northeasterly shore of Lake Chalco, the southernmost of the chain of lakes, and then upon an ancient causeway over the isthmus lying between Lakes Xochimilco and Texcoco. On this isthmus a rocky hill known as the Peñon Viejo was made strong by every device of the engineering art. The direct access to the city was thus controlled by what was believed to be an impregnable position, and the isthmus was further strengthened by strong works thrown up in the neighboring village of Mexicalcingo." *

At the sound of a signal-gun announcing the approach of Scott's army on the afternoon of August 9 thousands of enthusiastic volunteers, accompanied by bands playing patriotic airs, clergy invoking blessings, and a great part of the population of the capital poured out from the city to the Peñon to help repulse the invader. But Scott was not the sort of general to order an impetuous frontal attack on the carefully prepared trenches and batteries before him. Halting at Ayotla, in front of the Peñon, he

* Rives, II, 453.

spent the next two days reconnoitring the ground, and had almost decided to turn Santa Anna's right by an attack on Mexicalcingo when Colonel Duncan, an artillery officer of Worth's division, discovered a practicable path round the southern end of Lake Chalco, between the marshy shore of the lake and the steep slope of the hills at the southern end of the valley.

Marching by this route, the American army came on August 16 to the village of San Augustin, on the road from the Pacific port of Acapulco to Mexico City. But between San Augustin and the capital the Acapulco road passed first by the great *hacienda* of San Antonio and then through the hamlet and over the bridge of Churubusco, both strongly built places held by large forces of Mexicans. A direct advance over the mile of open road northward from San Augustin to the castle-like buildings of San Antonio would have cost many lives. Again a turning movement had to be made, though the swampy fields to the east of the road were too soft for the passage of artillery, while to the west lay a great field of lava called the Pedregal.

"I cannot better describe this Pedregal," declared a young naval officer with Scott's army, "than by comparing it to a sea, which having been lashed into fury by a tempest, had been suddenly transformed by the wand of an enchanter into stone."*

It was no easy task to move an army across this jagged mass of lava, but five miles of it had to be crossed to reach the next road to the north. This was a local highway running from the little village of Contreras through the town of San Angel to Mexico City, and following the ravine of the Magdalena Brook till that stream flowed into the Churubusco River. A mule path through the Pedregal from San Augustin to the Contreras road was discovered by Scott's engineers and widened to permit the passage of artillery by the labor of Pillow's division, which led the advance over it on the 19th.

But when Worth's advance-guard came to the edge of the Pedregal they found the exit blocked by a strong force of Mexicans,

* Raphael Semmes, "Service Afloat and Ashore," p. 393. He is best known to history as the captain of the Confederate commerce-destroyer *Alabama*.

intrenched on a hill on the other side of the Contreras road. This hill was near a ranch called Padierna, which the Americans confused with the village of Contreras, a mile farther south at the end of the road. Because of this confusion the fight that followed is called by us the battle of Contreras, but by the Mexicans the battle of Padierna.

"War-rockets," mountain howitzers, and Magruder's field-battery—which had been armed with guns captured at Cerro Gordo and had "Stonewall" Jackson for its second lieutenant—were brought up by Worth and opened fire on the hill. But General Valencia, who held that position with 4,000 men of the Mexican "Army of the North," had twenty-two guns in position. His heavy cannon soon drove the American guns and skirmishers back into the Pedregal. "Nothing but their excessively bad firing," writes one of Magruder's gunners, "had saved our battery from being annihilated."

General Valencia, elated with his success, reported a great victory and refused to obey the orders sent him by Santa Anna to fall back on the capital. That

After the drawing by C. Nebel.

The Battle of Churubusco.

night while Valencia made merry in his tent, three brigades of United States regulars, and one of volunteers were advancing through the Pedregal to turn his left flank, "passing over volcanic rocks and across large fissures barely narrow enough for the men to get across by leaping." Men who cross that lava-field to-day find it no mean task for a trained athlete unburdened and in broad daylight to follow the trail those soldiers, encumbered with knapsack and flintlock, hurried over in pitchy darkness. Striking the Contreras road higher up, they cut off Valencia from the city and caused Santa Anna, who was advancing with a brigade to his relief, to fall back to San Angel and leave Valencia, whom he distrusted and hated as an old political rival, to his fate.

The four American brigades, commanded by General Persifer F. Smith, the senior brigadier, spent the night in and about the village of San Geronimo in a heavy downpour of rain. During this storm Captain Robert E. Lee made his way back across the Pedregal: "The greatest feat of physical and moral courage per-

formed by any individual in my knowledge, pending the campaign," in the opinion of General Scott to whom Lee reported at San Augustin in time to arrange for a demonstration in Valencia's front to distract his attention while Smith attacked his rear.

At sunrise on Friday, August 20, Smith's, Riley's, and Cadwalader's brigades crept quietly up the ravines that led to the left and rear of Valencia's position, reloaded and primed their rain-soaked muskets, fixed bayonets, and charged. Two Mexican guns were hastily pointed and fired to the rear, there was a feeble sputter of musketry, and then the charge struck home. In exactly seventeen minutes the fight was over, and the utterly routed Mexicans were riding or running their fastest up the road to San Angel.

"Thus," reported Scott, "was the great victory at Contreras achieved; one road to the capital opened; 700 of the enemy killed; 813 prisoners, including among 88 officers 4 generals; besides many colors and standards; 22 pieces of brass ordnance, half of large caliber; thousands of small

arms and accoutrements; an immense quantity of shot, shells, powder, and cartridges; 700 pack-mules, many horses, etc., etc.—all in our hands."

Among the captured cannon were the two brass six-pounders that had been lost by Lieutenant O'Brien of the Fourth Artillery at Buena Vista, and were retaken at Contreras by a company of the same regiment.

Scott himself led Pillow's and Twiggs's divisions in pursuit of the flying Mexicans up the road from Contreras through San Angel and beyond. Swinging to the east, Scott quickly drove a small force of Mexicans out of the ancient village of Coyoacan, where Cortez had first established the viceregal capital of New Spain. This was an important cross-roads, in the rear of San Antonio, from which post the Mexican garrison were retreating as fast as they could run, with Worth's division in close pursuit, up the Acapulco road to the bridge at Churubusco.

A *tête-de-pont*, a strong earthwork mounting five guns and protected by a wet ditch filled waist-deep with river water,

guarded the southern end of the bridge. A quarter of a mile to the southwest, toward Coyoacan, stands the picturesque Convent of San Mateo, built in 1678, and designed like all the Spanish-American ecclesiastical edifices of that period, for a fortress in time of need. Round it ran a thick stone wall twelve feet high, scaffolded within so that infantry might fire over the top, and protected without by an earthwork mounting six guns. The main strength of the convent garrison consisted of the crack Independencia and Bravo battalions of the National Guard, the flower of Mexico City, while the *tête-de-pont* was held by the Battalion of San Patricio, composed of deserters, most of whom were Irish Catholics from the American army. Across the bridge on the north bank of the shallow Churubusco River, which had been artificially straightened into an irrigation ditch running due east and west, were drawn up dense masses of Mexican infantry in reserve.

The guns of the *tête-de-pont*, opening on the head of Worth's column, made that general deploy his division to the left and

right of the road, but the heavy cross-fire from the convent forced his left wing back on the centre, till his whole force had withdrawn to the east of the Acapulco road. There, with their line curving concavely from the river on their right to the road on their left, Worth's regulars stood or advanced slowly for two hours through the swampy fields, suffering severely, though covered by the tall uncut corn, from the fire of the renegades in the *tête-de-pont*.

Twiggs at the same time was advancing independently against the convent, also through corn-fields and under a withering fire. An artillery duel raged between the six Mexican guns at the convent and an American light battery. Shields's brigade of New York volunteers and the "Palmetto Regiment" of South Carolina, together with a brigade of "new regulars," under Franklin Pierce, later President of the United States, forded the river and advanced east along its north bank. These raw volunteers and recruits, raked by a flanking fire from the convent, and faced by thousands of Mexicans under Santa Anna himself, were soon forced to halt

but stood their ground sturdily. So three independent and bloody actions raged in and about Churubusco.

At last the Mexican troops lining the north bank of the river began to retreat, while the defenders of the *tête-de-pont* and the convent ran out of ammunition. As their fire slackened, a mixed force of Worth's men waded across the river and began firing into the rear of the *tête-de-pont*. At this, their comrades charged across the ditch and over the earthwork. The defenders were quickly killed, captured, or put to flight; the fugitives streaming over the bridge and mingling with the reserve troops north of the river in a disorderly retreat to the city. After them came Worth, Pierce, and Shields with their infantry, while Harney's dragoons charged up to the very guns of the San Antonio gate of Mexico City.

"At this moment," says a Mexican historian, "a mounted American officer, in uniform of blue, penetrated the low earthen rampart, sword in hand, dealing sabre blows and falling wounded on the esplanade. Many swords were drawn to

kill him, but others also hastened to defend him on seeing him fall. He rose crippled, radiant with valor, and smiling at the felicity of being at the gates of the capital." *

So did "Dashing Phil Kearny," then a captain in the First Dragoons, lose his arm, while Major Mills of the Pennsylvania infantry, who had joined the charge as a volunteer, was killed inside the gate itself.

As Worth went over the *tête-de-pont*, Twiggs stormed the battery outside the convent wall. The church itself held out a little longer, but the defenders, when they saw they were surrounded and their own guns turned against them, displayed the white flag from the belfry.

One hundred and four officers and 1,155 men surrendered at the convent. All the American deserters captured at the bridge were either hung, or branded with a red-hot iron with the letter "D," in accordance with the brutal military code of the period. Curiously enough, a company of Mexican renegades fought at Churubusco on the American side.

* "Noticias," p. 286.

The two days' fighting that gained Scott the whole valley south of Mexico City cost his army 137 killed, 879 wounded, and 40 missing—a total loss of 1,056, or more than a tenth of its total strength. The Mexican loss cannot be computed with any exactness, but counting the very many desertions, Santa Anna's army must have been reduced by at least 6,000 men, besides the guns and equipment captured. The moral havoc created by these two crushing defeats was also very great, though somewhat offset by the gallant defense of Churubusco and the repulse of the pursuers at the San Antonio gate.

Most military critics agree that Churubusco was a needless battle. By menacing its rear and allowing the garrison time to retreat, Scott could have taken that place as he took San Antonio, without losing a man. But he had not expected to find Churubusco strongly held, and Scott's slow-working mind was better at planning a pitched battle than evading an unexpected obstacle in the field.

Ordering his divisional commanders "to take up battering or assaulting positions,"

Scott sat down in his headquarters at San Augustin to draw up a summons for the surrender of the city to be delivered in the morning.

"But," wrote the war correspondent of the New Orleans *Picayune*, "the darkness of night had hardly fallen on the 20th of August, and the smoke of Churubusco was still hanging lazily over the low and marshy grounds, when a coach containing a deputation from the English embassy came out of the city and approached Worth's pickets. . . . As their mission was to General Scott, they were permitted to pass the outposts. It was now evident that Santa Anna, unable further to continue the defense with his army broken and dispirited, was disposed to open negotiations for an armistice."*

* George W. Kendall, "The War Between the United States and Mexico," illustrated, p. 35.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FALL OF THE CITY OF MEXICO

AN armistice was promptly granted by Scott, who wanted peace and the political prestige it would bring him as ardently as Santa Anna desired a breathing space. Commissioners were appointed on each side to discuss terms. On the day they met, a week after Churubusco, some American quartermaster's department wagons that had been permitted to enter the city for supplies were attacked by a mob, one of the unarmed teamsters killed and several others badly beaten. The Mexican Government apologized, however, and the negotiations continued, but without accomplishing anything. Santa Anna dared not bring on a revolution at home by yielding up the territory demanded by the Americans, and after a great deal of shilly-shallying the armistice was broken off on September 5. On the following day a rumor reached

General Scott that the Mexicans were melting down their church-bells and casting them into cannon at a foundry in the Molino del Rey. This "Mill of the King," where both flour and gunpowder had been made in colonial times, was a long range of massive stone buildings at the western end of the hill of Chapultepec.

When the Aztec people first came to the valley of Anahuac, or Mexico, many centuries before Cortez, they made their first settlement, according to ancient legend, on Chapultepec, the "Hill of the Grasshoppers." This hill is a long, narrow ridge of volcanic rock, rising steeply out of the flat, prehistoric lake bottom of the surrounding valley to a height of one hundred and ninety-five feet. This ridge is nearly half a mile long at the base, runs almost due east and west, and lies about three miles southwest from the National Palace on the great plaza of Mexico City. Precipitous on the north and east, Chapultepec slopes steeply down on the west, where from time immemorial has stood a noble grove of cypress-trees. The summit of the hill was levelled off into terraces and a palace built there by two

successive Spanish viceroys, father and son, toward the end of the eighteenth century. The National Military Academy has been housed there since its creation in 1833, the ill-fated Maximilian chose Chapultepec for his imperial palace, and to-day it is the official summer residence of the President of Mexico.

The palace, or "Castle," of Chapultepec, as the Americans persisted in calling it, though it was and is no more like a fortress than any other large, substantial dwelling-house, faces to the south, and its main entrance was reached in 1847 by a zigzag ramp or roadway running up the steep southern side of the hill. Below, high park walls surrounded the ridge on every side but the west, where the Molino del Rey completed the enclosure.

Separated from the Molino and about five hundred yards west of its northern end was another old Spanish structure—a small, square building called the Casa Mata. This is Spanish for "casemate," but it is said the place had been built for a powder-mill. Surrounded by an earthwork and ditch, it was a formidable position to attack,

but its strength was much concealed by a fold of the ground before it.

General Worth was ordered by Scott on September 7 to drive away the large body of Mexican troops massed in or about the Molino, and capture and destroy the "cannon foundry." Reconnoitring carefully, Worth discovered the strength of the Mexicans' left wing resting on the Molino, underestimated that of their right at the Casa Mata, and decided to pierce their centre between the two groups of buildings.

The Mexican line made two sides of a right-angled triangle, and Worth, under cover of darkness, formed his men on the third. A storming party of 500 picked officers and men chosen from the two brigades of Worth's division were ready to charge the enemy's centre, covered by the fire of two field-batteries and a couple of twenty-four-pounders. Garland's brigade was on the right, Clarke's on the left, while Cadwalader's brigade of Pillow's division, whose assistance Worth had asked for, stood in reserve. Three hundred dragoons under Major Sumner sat in their saddles and

wondered if they were there to charge stone walls.

But only a mile to the west, at the hacienda of Morales, were no less than 4,000 Mexican lancers under General Alvarez, with orders to fall on the American rear and left flank as soon as they advanced to the attack. In the Molino were four battalions of the National Guard, two battalions of Mexican regulars held the Casa Mata, and six more battalions of regulars and a light battery had formed the centre under General Ramirez. But during the night of August 7, while Worth's men were forming to attack them, Santa Anna took away one of Ramirez's battalions and ordered the rest to move over to the left in front of the Molino del Rey.

At the first flush of the tropic dawn the American twenty-four-pounders began to shell the Molino, as the storming party dashed gallantly forward, routed Ramirez's men, and captured their battery. But the grape-shot and musket-balls poured into them from the buildings drove the stormers back. The triumphant Mexicans pursued them down the slope, retaking the cap-

tured guns and butchering the American wounded.

Garland's and Cadwalader's brigades now charged together and assaulted the Molino along its entire quarter mile of front. The garrison defended themselves like men and there was the savagest kind of hand-to-hand fighting. Finally the gates were burst in, the Americans poured into the buildings and cleared them with the bayonet. The surviving Mexicans fled up the hill to Chapultepec, whose guns had kept up a constant but ineffective fire at long range throughout the fight.

In the meanwhile Clarke's brigade, after a too-slight bombardment by Duncan's battery, had attempted to storm the Casa Mata, but had been driven back in confusion and with heavy loss. Nearly 40 per cent of one regiment, the Fifth United States Infantry, had been killed or wounded. General Alvarez and his cavalry division, outnumbering the total American force in the field, now had a golden opportunity to charge and ride down his broken and disordered enemy. But Duncan's battery opened on him with canister, Sumner's

300 dragoons trotted up, and Alvarez and his 4,000 tamely withdrew.

Duncan's guns were turned again on the Casa Mata, which was now isolated by the fall of the Molino. Realizing this, the garrison slipped over the rear wall and got away over the fields to the north. The Americans were under strict orders not to pursue, though Worth had begged to be allowed to press on after taking the Molino del Rey and assault Chapultepec. "Had this victory been followed up promptly," wrote General Grant, who had been foremost in the fight, "no doubt Americans and Mexicans would have gone over the defenses of Chapultepec so near together that the place would have fallen into our hands without further loss." *

Molino del Rey was a useless fight and a Pyrrhic victory. Neither cannon nor foundry were discovered there, though some old disused molds showed that there might once have been such an establishment in the mill. After the powder magazine had been blown up and the captured cannon removed, the buildings were aban-

* "Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant," I, 152.

doned. As at Churubusco, General Scott had thrown away his men's lives needlessly, from his inability to judge accurately when he was forced to think quickly.

Of the 3,447 American troops engaged, 116 were killed, 653 wounded, and 18 missing—a total loss of 787. At least nine or ten thousand fought on the Mexican side, and of these 685 were taken prisoners. Their infantry must have lost very many killed or wounded, and many more deserted from the broken and disorganized battalions. The cavalry had kept carefully out of harm's way.

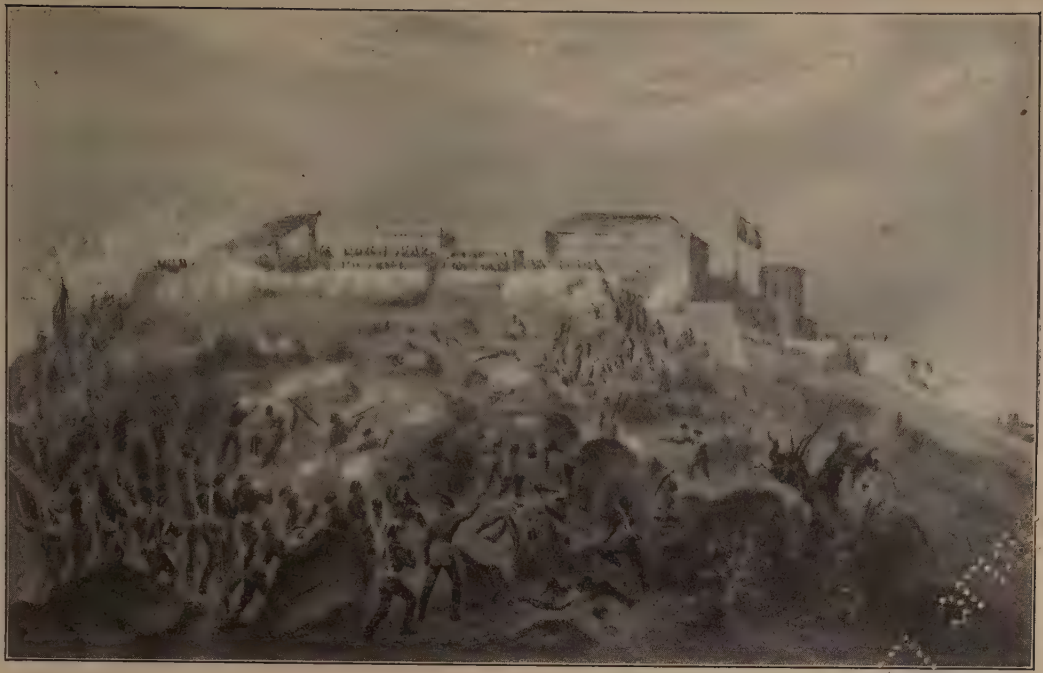
Having reoccupied the abandoned Molino, Santa Anna proclaimed a great victory, and had the church-bells ring peals of triumph. But unlike Buena Vista, this battle had been fought too near home to be lied about successfully, and the demoralized garrison and terrified citizens waited gloomily for the next move of the besiegers.

"The city of Mexico," says Mr. Rives, "was in no sense a fortified place. There were no walls about it. The so-called gates (*garitas*) were mere stations intended

to be occupied by detachments of police or revenue officers; but, as they were generally solid stone buildings they could be made to serve for purposes of defense, and at most of them barricades and earthworks, mounting only a few light guns, had been hastily constructed. But the strength of these posts lay chiefly in the fact that they could only be approached by perfectly straight causeways running through marshy fields and flanked by broad ditches." *

After carefully going over the ground and holding a council of war, Scott decided to make a demonstration against the southern gates, but to enter the city by the two causeways that ran from the eastern end of Chapultepec Hill. Of these two, the Tacubaya causeway was the more southerly and led straight to the Belem Gate, while the other made a long angle to the north before entering the Gate of San Cosme. If his army was to follow these routes, it was necessary for Scott to capture not only the batteries that guarded the entrance to the cause-

* Rives, II, 539.



After the drawing by C. Nebel.

The Storming of Chapultepec—Pillow's Attack.

ways, but the hill and palace that towered above them.

Therefore, the American siege guns and mortars were trained on Chapultepec, and bombarded the palace all day Sunday, September 12. The building itself, well-protected by sand-bags and timbering, was not much damaged, but the nerves of the garrison were badly shaken. Many of the Mexican soldiers there deserted that night.

Sunrise on Monday the 13th, found Pillow's division in possession of the Molino del Rey, ready to charge up the western slope of the hill, while another division under Quitman were waiting to storm the zigzag road leading up to the south front of the palace. The windows and flat-topped roof of that building were swarming with Mexican infantry, while fourteen guns had been mounted on the terrace.

At eight o'clock, the American batteries ceased firing, and by so doing gave the signal for the advance of the two divisions. Each was headed by a storming party of 500 picked regulars, carrying crowbars, picks, and scaling ladders.

General Pillow was struck down by a grape-shot, but his men rushed on, driving the Mexican skirmishers before them through the cypress grove, and from behind an intrenchment half-way up the slope, so precipitately that the fugitives had no time to light the fuses of the mines that had been laid on the hillside. A moat, twelve feet wide and ten deep, checked the advance at the foot of the retaining wall of the terrace. Under a heavy fire, the scaling ladders were brought up and used for bridges, then raised and placed against the wall. While their comrades below picked off the Mexicans who lined the parapet, the foremost Americans, led by a private of the "Voltiguers," or Tenth Infantry, swarmed up the ladders, fought their way over the ramparts, and cleared the terrace.

On the south, the New York, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina volunteers from Quitman's division had breached the park wall with crowbars, and were scaling the terrace, or fighting their way up the zigzag road, in spite of a four-pounder placed at the angle and the musketry fire from

the palace windows and roof. Presently the Americans on the terrace were able to fire down on the rear of the batteries guarding the entrance to the Tacubaya road. These batteries were then charged and taken by Quitman's storming party and the battalion of marines.

The palace itself was broken into and its defenders, after savage fighting, were driven at the point of the bayonet from room after room and floor above floor, till the American flag waved triumphantly from the roof, and the surviving Mexicans threw down their arms. While resistance lasted, no quarter had been given, for many of the garrison were known to have been among the defenders of the Molino del Rey, and the memory of how their wounded comrades had been put to death there maddened the Americans.

The young cadets of the National Military Academy joined bravely in the defense of their Alma Mater, the West Point of Mexico, and several of them were killed. A monument commemorates the valor of these boy-patriots, which has recently found a parallel in the desperate defense of the

National Naval Academy at the taking of Vera Cruz by the Atlantic Fleet, April 21, 1914. An historical legend has naturally grown up about the former exploit—as a similar legend may be expected to grow up about the latter—so that it is widely believed that Chapultepec was defended mainly by the cadets. But, as a matter of fact and record, there were more than 1,200 Mexican regulars and National Guardsmen in the garrison, and so few cadets—certainly less than 50—that General Bravo, the commanding officer, did not include them in his report of the strength of his forces, made the night before the assault.

After the fall of Chapultepec, General Quitman advanced with his division and a number of other troops along the Tacubaya causeway, while Worth, who had driven away a Mexican brigade from the north side of the ridge, pushed on along the other causeway, leading to the San Cosme Gate.

"The causeways by which Worth's and Quitman's commands respectively advanced were wide and solid structures, well ele-

vated above the level of the marshes they traversed. Down the middle of each ran an aqueduct, the city's water-supply, which rested upon open arches and massive pillars of masonry, and afforded, said Scott, 'fine points of attack and defense.' The arches were, perhaps, of four or five feet span, and the columns four feet thick; so that, while affording some cover, the arches could not shelter many men at one time." *

Quitman placed three South Carolina volunteers, with bayoneted muskets and three regulars from the "Rifles," whose otherwise superior weapons had no bayonets, under each archway as the column advanced. Though the Mexicans holding the Belem *garita* defended their post bravely with cannon and musketry, they were picked off by the American rifles and their defenses battered by Quitman's field-guns, till they were forced to abandon the gate. But farther advance on Quitman's part was checked by the citadel with its fifteen guns, just within and to the north of the gate, and for the rest of that day and the

* Rives, II, 554.

following night his men had enough to do to hold the ground already taken.

Worth, in the meanwhile, had made his way along the San Cosme causeway under cover of the arches till he came to where the road was lined by houses on both sides. From that point he battered his way through the walls from house to house, advancing under cover and turning the barricades as he had done at Monterey. Quick-witted Lieutenant Grant of the Fourth Infantry planted a mountain howitzer in a church belfry, from where it dropped shell after shell among the defenders of the San Cosme Gate. Soon the gate was won, and that night several heavy mortars and siege-guns were brought up and planted within the city itself.

But at sunrise came delegations from the city government, bearing white flags and the news that Santa Anna and as much of his army as he could hold together had abandoned the city and were retreating to Guadalupe Hidalgo. Scott immediately demanded and received the surrender of the capital.

A battalion of United States marines led

the army into the city of Mexico (as the marines have led it into so many other places before and since), drove a mob of looters out of the National Palace, and hoisted the stars and stripes. Then General Winfield Scott, riding in full uniform at the head of his staff and escort, reined up his horse in the middle of the great plaza, and dramatically announced the completion of the conquest of Mexico.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TREATY OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO

STREET fighting began soon after Scott entered the National Palace. Though the Mexican army had withdrawn from the city, its generals had, like General Maas at Vera Cruz sixty-seven years later, released and armed all the convicts and left them to fight the Americans. Knives had been distributed among the "leperos," or professional beggars, with whom the capital swarmed, and these men, joined by deserters from Santa Anna's army and members of the National Guard, began stoning and "sniping" the American troops from windows and housetops.

One of the first shots wounded Brigadier-General Garland as he rode at the head of Worth's division into the city. A twenty-four-pound shell from a siege-gun promptly demolished the house from which that musket-shot had been fired. Other houses

held by "snipers" were broken into and cleared with the bayonet. Many bystanders and non-combatants were killed during the thirty-six hours of street fighting that followed, but, deplorable as this was, it was unavoidable. Deducting the Chapultepec garrison and other detachments, Scott had but 6,000 men with which to subdue and hold a hostile city of 200,000 inhabitants. It was no time for half-way measures or the tame sort of fighting the Mexicans were wont to wage in their own capital, when two rival factions would carefully intrench themselves and fire harmlessly at each other for several weeks. The Americans fought in grim earnest, expecting at every minute the return of Santa Anna and his army.

Hearing that the Americans were hard pressed, Santa Anna did return with a few troopers to Mexico City, but only to find Scott in complete control and the municipal authorities helping him restore order. Santa Anna accordingly rode back to Guadalupe Hidalgo, where he resigned the presidency and set out with the few thousand men remaining to him to recapture Puebla.

The small American garrison there had

been attacked by the populace soon after Scott's advance to Mexico City. Abandoning the rest of Puebla, the Americans occupied the citadel and a massive church that stood near it on a ridge overlooking the town, while most of the 1,800 sick and wounded were quartered in the San José barracks not far below. With not more than 500 volunteers and convalescents, and a few pieces of captured artillery, the commanding officer, Colonel Childs of the regular army, had to maintain all three of these positions against a large force of local irregular troops, who, however, did nothing but keep up a futile fire from a perfectly safe distance.

Santa Anna reached Puebla on September 21 with several thousand Mexican regulars and a train of artillery, formally summoned Colonel Childs to surrender, and received a prompt but equally formal refusal. Though he had now a splendid opportunity to strike Scott a heavy blow, capture much-needed supplies, and revive Mexico's hopes and power of resistance by what should have been an easy victory, Santa Anna, instead of pressing the siege, made only a

few feeble and desultory attacks during the next week.

Then, hearing of the approach of a wagon-train and escort from Vera Cruz, Santa Anna marched to meet it with most of his forces on October 1. But the train-guard had been overtaken and reinforced by a newly landed brigade under General Lane, while Santa Anna's men rapidly deserted on the march. Having easily brushed Santa Anna aside and captured two of his guns in a spirited skirmish, Lane entered Puebla and relieved Childs on October 12.

After a narrow escape from being captured by Lane's cavalry and having been summoned by his own government to appear before a court of inquiry, Santa Anna left Mexico under an American safe-conduct and fled to Jamaica. Though he was recalled again as dictator in the fifties, he was soon driven out, to return once more in 1867, when he was imprisoned for conspiracy against the republic, but pardoned and released. Santa Anna's long and adventurous life was ended amid poverty and neglect in the city of Mexico in 1876.

Except for a second and uncalled-for

invasion of Chihuahua by Colonel Sterling Price, the governor of New Mexico, the fighting was now over. The Mexican army was reduced to a few thousand men, in widely scattered detachments, without a head. The American army could have marched with little or no opposition through the rest of Mexico, while the American navy had captured or was closely blockading every Mexican port. It was time to make peace and on the conqueror's terms.

After Santa Anna's abdication, in the absence of a vice-president or secretary of foreign affairs, the presiding judge of the supreme court, Señor Manuel de la Pena y Pena, became provisional President. Like Señor Carbajal in 1914, Pena y Pena was not a great leader of men, but he was a jurist of high repute and a peace-loving patriot. A provisional government was established at Queretaro, and began negotiations with Mr. Trist.

A letter from Buchanan, written early in October when the news of the failure of the September armistice had reached Washington, now ordered Trist to withdraw from Mexico. Trist accordingly arranged to go

down to Vera Cruz by the next convoy, but changed his mind at the importunities of the Mexicans and stayed to negotiate a treaty on the terms of his original instructions.

As soon as the immediate danger of war was removed the Mexican Congress delayed for weeks over trifles and haggled for an advance payment of the promised indemnity after the terms had been agreed on, till the American commissioner and the American general came, or pretended to come, to the end of their patience. Toward the end of January, Trist ostentatiously broke off the negotiations, and Scott, whose army had been strongly reinforced and was unhampered by any armistice, talked loudly of marching on Queretaro. Though one hundred and fifty miles of rough road separated that town from Mexico City, the news of that threat reached Queretaro in less than two days and the order for the Mexican commissioners at the capital to sign the treaty came posting back in something like twenty-four hours.

The treaty was signed, however, not in

the city of Mexico but, at the request of the Mexican commissioners, in the neighboring town of Guadalupe Hidalgo, on February 2, 1848.

By this Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico ceded to the United States, New Mexico, upper California, and Texas to the Rio Grande, in return for the payment of $15,000,000. Three millions were to be paid in cash as soon as the treaty should be ratified, and the remainder in instalments. The United States also assumed the unpaid claims of American citizens against Mexico, and agreed to prevent the Indians from raiding across the new frontier—a service that was commuted a few years later for an additional payment of $10,000,000.

Both President Polk and the majority of the United States Senate were well pleased with the terms of the treaty, and so were most of the American people. The country had gained what it was fighting for, and was weary of war, with its expense and bloodshed. But there was a formidable opposition in the Senate, formed of two diametrically opposite fac-

tions—the extreme Southerners, led by Calhoun, who wanted more, if not all, of Mexico for additional slave territory, and the New England extremists, led by Webster, who wanted no new territory at all. The latter, actuated both by the love of freedom and the narrow provincialism that characterized the New England of that period, were unwittingly helping their bitterest foes, for the rejection of the treaty would have meant the resumption of the war and, perhaps, the extinction of Mexico as a nation. But the middle course, for which Polk had firmly stood, prevailed, and the treaty was ratified by the vote of 38 senators to 14, well over the necessary two-thirds, on March 1, 1848.

Then followed another tedious period of dilatory action on the part of the Mexican Government in giving its ratification to the now slightly amended treaty. The statesmen at Queretaro talked on interminably, while General Paredes was hatching royalist plots, Santa Anna's partisans were busy intriguing for his return, and minor uprisings and mutinies broke out continuously in one part of the country after

another. One Mexican faction that favored American rule, even asked General Scott to proclaim himself dictator and raise a "Mexican" army of American veterans. This tempting offer was, however, declined by Scott, who was soon afterward ordered to hand over the command to his subordinate, General Butler, and appear before a court of inquiry on charges of attempting to bribe Santa Anna into making peace during the negotiations at Puebla. This court, composed of army officers who had not served under Scott, and were therefore supposed to be impartial, also investigated the unseemly squabbles that had taken place between Scott and Generals Worth and Pillow. Though Scott was soon acquitted of some of these charges while the rest were dropped, this arraignment and trial of a victorious general in the presence of his own army did more than anything else to impress the Mexicans with the power of the United States Government.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was finally ratified and signed on May 30, 1848. The rearguard of the American

army marched out of Mexico City on June 12, and on July 30, the city of Vera Cruz and the Castle of San Juan de Ulloa, always the last points to be yielded up by an invader, were formally evacuated.

CHAPTER XV

THE RESULTS OF THE WAR

"THE United States forces employed in the invasion of Mexico," says Wilcox, "aggregated about 100,000 armed men—26,690 regulars, 56,926 volunteers, and the balance in the navy, commissariat and transportation departments. Of this number, 120 officers and 1,400 men fell in battle or died from wounds received there; 10,800 men perished by disease, always more fatal than bullets, and many were ruined in health or disabled by wounds —in all about 25,000. The cost, exclusive of pensions granted in late years, was from 130,000,000 to 160,000,000 of dollars." *

But over a million square miles of territory had been added to the United States. Out of the conquered Mexican provinces of California and New Mexico, whose southern borders were presently advanced

* Wilcox, "History of the Mexican War," p. 567.

and rounded out by the Gadsden Purchase, have been formed not only the two States of California and New Mexico, but all of Arizona, Utah, and Nevada, most of Colorado, and parts of Wyoming and Kansas. And over the division of these rich spoils of the Mexican War began a dispute that led directly to the Civil War.

Representative Brinkerhoff of Ohio had prepared an amendment to a bill that was introduced in the House of Representatives in 1846, to appropriate money to compensate Mexico for any of her territory the United States might forcibly annex. But, being unable to obtain the floor himself, Brinkerhoff had his proposed amendment introduced by Representative Daniel Wilmot of Pennsylvania, and therefore, it is known in history as the Wilmot Proviso.

"As an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico by the United States," demanded the Proviso, "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall exist in any such territory."

"The Wilmot Proviso," says Professor Albert Bushnell Hart, "was the bugle-call

which aroused the North to the intention of the South to increase the slave States beyond Texas, and thus to extend slavery. Lincoln once boasted that he had voted for the principle of the Wilmot Proviso forty-two times in the two years of his service in the House." *

Passed by the House by a large majority, the Wilmot Proviso was lost in the Senate on the last night of the session, because a Massachusetts senator, a well-meaning but fatal friend of the measure, made too long a speech in its favor, and so prevented a vote till midnight and adjournment. By the next session, the Southerners who had voted for the Proviso had now grasped its import and fought it, and indeed the sectional line was soon so clearly drawn and the feeling on both sides so bitter that the Civil War might well have broken out ten years earlier than it did, if the leaders of each faction, Calhoun and Webster, had not made a truce with the famous Compromise of of 1850. By this, the question of slavery in the new territories was left to the de-

* Hart's "Contemporaries," IV, 38.

cision of the men who settled there; the doctrine of "Squatter Sovereignty," whose memory calls up visions of "Bleeding Kansas," Sharps' rifles, and John Brown of Osawatomie.

California's fate was decided a week before the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, when gold was discovered in Colonel Sutter's mill-race. Over the plains, round Cape Horn, or across the Isthmus of Panama came the Forty-niners to populate California and make it a State—a free State. Slavery could not be tolerated in a land of highly paid white labor, and when the war came California stood by the Union. So also did New Mexico, whose people's loyalty, however, was greatly stimulated by their ancient grudge against Texas. From the Mexican War the Southern "slave-power" gained only Texas—which had entered the Union before the first shot was fired at Palo Alto—and the awakened hostility of the North.

"Even the question of slavery," noted President Polk in his diary, "is thrown into Congress and agitated in the midst of a foreign war. . . . It is a most wicked agi-

tation that can end in no good and must produce infinite mischief."*

"Old Rough and Ready," Zachary Taylor, the popular military hero of the war, succeeded Polk in the presidency, and four years later Brigadier-General Franklin Pierce was also elected President, largely on his war record. Throughout the country veterans were favored candidates for every office from President to pound-keeper.

The Mexican War inspired Lowell to write his Biglow Papers—the first great American satire. Long after the world has forgotten the victories of General Winfield Scott it will chuckle over the sayings and misadventures of Private Birdofredum Sawin.

In our first war in Mexico, as in the war with Spain, we made a slow and expensive job of beating a fourth-rate adversary and thereby learned how unprepared we were to fight a real enemy. Most of this lesson was promptly forgotten, but not all. Drill was simplified, weapons modernized, and general efficiency increased during the eighteen-fifties, both in the regular army and the

* "Polk's Diary," p. 347.

organized militia. It was the memory of his subordinate's brilliant work in Mexico that made the aged General Scott beseech Colonel Robert E. Lee to take command of the United States and not the Virginian forces at the outbreak of the Civil War. Grant, boldly investing Fort Donelson with an army smaller than the garrison it was besieging, did so because he "had known General Pillow in Mexico and judged that with any force, no matter how small, I could march up to within gunshot of any intrenchment he was given to hold."* When Vicksburg fell, Grant received its "unconditional surrender" from Pemberton, whom he had last met in the church-steeple, where Grant had been training a mountain howitzer on the San Cosme Gate of Mexico City. Captain Winslow of the *Kearsarge* and Captain Semmes of the *Alabama* were old messmates, who had each commanded and lost a ship in the blockade of Vera Cruz. Mexico supplemented West Point and Annapolis as a training-school for the Civil War.

Mexico itself, weary of war and with its

* Grant's "Memoirs," I, 241.

government strengthened by the three millions of cash indemnity, had a few months of respite after the withdrawal of the American troops. Then the mutinies and revolutions broke out anew but with a difference. It had taken the American invasion to make the common people of Mexico realize how weak and worthless was the army and how selfishly unpatriotic the church that had ruled and plundered them since the days of Iturbide. The spirit of Hidalgo was born again in the great Indian patriot Benito Juarez. Under his leadership the Mexican people had broken the power of the military and clerical oligarchy when Napoleon III took advantage of our own Civil War to set up a sham empire in Mexico. But the heroic Juarez kept up the struggle in the north, till gathering war-clouds in Europe and a strong hint from Secretary Seward that Mexico was a good place for the French troops to emigrate out of, forced the Emperor of the French to withdraw Bazaine's army and leave the "Emperor of Mexico" to his fate. Maximilian, Austrian archduke, sham emperor, but brave man, died facing a firing-squad

at Puebla with the gallant grace of a Charles II.

"God save the King! Well, that King is gone,
Ages ago, and the Hapsburg one,
Shot; but the rock of the Church lives on.

"God save the King! What matter indeed,
If King or President succeed
To a country haggard with sloth and greed?" *

If royalty and imperialism were at last dead in Mexico, democracy and self-government were not yet born. Juarez, weary and old, sank into his grave before the task of building up a true republic had been fairly begun. The forces of reaction, aided now by American capitalists eager for railroad and mining concessions, triumphed in the long despotism of Porfirio Diaz. Superficially there were peace and plenty in the land, and historians wrote "finis" to the long tale of Mexico's sorrows. They neither foresaw that the old anarchy would return, once the dictator's hand relaxed, nor did they recall this gloomy prophecy made by a Mexican in 1850:

"What must be, must be. Sooner or

* Bret Harte.

later, we shall see ourselves overwhelmed in another, or more than one, disastrous war, until the flag of the stars floats over the last span of the territory which it so much covets."*

* "Noticias," chap. I.

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